ESSAY

ON THE

TREATMENT AND CONVERSION

OF

AFRICAN SLAVES.

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

TREATMENT AND CONVERSION

OF

AFRICAN SLAVES

IN THE

BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES.

BY THE

REVEREND JAMES RAMSAY, M. A.

VICAR OF TESTON, IN KENT.

God hath made of one Blood all Nations of the Earth, for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth, Acts xvii. 26.

He that ſtealeth a Man, and ſelleth him, or if he be found in his Hand, he ſhall ſurely be put to death, Exodus xxi. 16.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR T. WALKER, C. JENKIN,
R. MARCHBANK, L. WHITE,
R. BURTON, P. BYRNE.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

THE

PREFACE.

A LETTER of an ordinary length, in anſwer to the humane one which is here ſubjoined, gave beginning to this performance. By frequent tranſcription, it ſenſibly increaſed in ſize, and extended itſelf to collateral ſubjects, till it had become ſomething like a ſyſtem for the regulation and improvement of our ſugar colonies, and the advancement and converſion of their ſlaves.

On ſubmitting the manuſcript to thoſe, who were much better judges than the author could pretend to be, of the preſent prevailing taſte (and many perſons of rank and learning have honoured it with a peruſal) the account of the treatment of ſlaves in our colonies engaged their ſympathy, and the plan for their improvement and converſion had their hearty good wiſhes. But they exhorted him, almoſt all with one voice, to ſuppreſs every part that tended to introduce thoſe political diſcuſſions, which

which muſt be unavoidable in treating of the ſtate of colonies, and their dependence on a mother country.

As the author had, from the firſt, no private views to gratify in the plan, and wiſhed only to give it every poſſible chance of ſucceſs with the public, their deciſion was final with him; and in conformity to it, every thing that related to the improvement, and better government of the colonies, has been omitted. By this alteration in the original form of the work, it has neceſſarily loſt ſomething of that ſyſtematic order, which contributes ſo much to the beauty of compoſitions, and leads ſo pleaſantly on from premiſes to concluſion. But humanity is its object, not reputation. When the finer feelings of the ſoul are engaged, it would be a criminal trifling to aim at amuſement.

I will not inſult the reader's underſtanding, by an attempt to demonſtrate it to be an object of importance, to gain to ſociety, to reaſon and religion, half a million of our kind, equally with us adapted for advancing themſelves in every art and ſcience, that can diſtinguiſh man from man, equally with us made capable of looking forward to and enjoying futurity. I rather wiſh to call in his benevolence, his conſcience,

conſcience, his intereſt, to give their aid in carrying on the work. The people, whoſe improvement is here propoſed, toil for the Britiſh ſtate. The public, therefore, has an intereſt in their advancement in ſociety. And what is here claimed for them? Not bounties, or gifts from parliament, or people; but leave to become more uſeful to themſelves, their maſters, and the ſtate. And ſurely a plan, that has ſuch an end in view, needs only to be explained to procure a general prepoſſeſſion in its favour. While the man of feeling finds every generous ſentiment indulged in the proſpect which it opens, the politician, the ſelfiſh, will have all their little wiſhes of opulence, and accumulation fully realized. The deſign then, muſt have every man of every complexion combined in its behalf; and there is nothing to be accounted for but the author's courage, in preſuming to offer to the public his thoughts in particular on the ſubject.

From the manner in which this work had its beginning, it will appear that neither vanity, nor ſelf-ſufficiency, led the author to the attempt. It was not till after the ſeventh copy had been read, and its purpoſe approved of by many perſons of worth and judgment, that he entertained the moſt diſtant thoughts of publication. Even now, that it has undergone every

ſuggeſted correction, and received every improvement that three tranſcriptions in ſucceſſion could give it, on their opinion, rather than his own, he reſts the probability of its proving acceptable to the public.

Not to be guilty of ſtifling what had a generous purpoſe in view, and poſſibly might do good, if ſo it pleaſed God, has been, from the firſt, as far as reſpected himſelf, the only inducement. Profit he diſclaims; and willingly would he transfer all the credit that can poſſibly ariſe from it, to him who would take on him the cenſure. Yet ſhould he not forgive himſelf, were he to diſcover that ill nature had ſharpened a ſingle expreſſion in the Eſſay, or dragged an unlucky object of reſentment into view. To blame has not been a pleaſant taſk. He has ſuffered more from the neceſſity of doing it, than the perſons affected will probably do from the application; which yet, except in one caſe, muſt be the work of conſcience with themſelves. In this caſe, the perſon who is the object, is of ſuch an happy diſpoſition, as to be incapable of feeling cenſure, and of that eſtabliſhed character, that nothing can hurt him. The public, therefore, has a right to him, as to a beacon placed near a dangerous quick ſand.

To

To conclude: the reader has here the remarks of about twenty years experience in the Weſt-Indies, and above fourteen years particular application to the ſubject. If it draws the attention due to its importance, the author will have the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that he has not lived in vain for his country and mankind. And this conſideration will ſmooth before him the otherwiſe rugged paths of life. Should it fail in anſwering his well meant purpoſe, ſtill the thoughts of having made the attempt, will pleaſe on reflection; nor will the intention loſe its reward there, where his particular aim is to be found acceptable.

Letter referred to above, which ſuggeſted to the Author the Conſideration of the following Subject.

I will omit any apology, however needful, for offering my thoughts on the ſubject of ſlavery, to one, whoſe office and opportunities among ſlaves muſt induce him to think and act what is right reſpecting them. The moſt I can hope for is, to echo to him ſome of his own reflections, which perhaps the univerſal careleſſneſs and indifference prevailing in every thing that concerns them, may, at times, cauſe him to paſs inattentively by, or conſider leſs than their importance deſerves.

I am

I am ſure Mr. —— muſt always think himſelf not only obliged to uſe his ſlaves with kindneſs, but alſo viewing them as fellow-creatures, bound to extend his care to the ſecurity of their eternal happineſs, by inſtructing them in the relation which they bear to the great Author of their being, and gracious Redeemer of their ſouls, and in the duty ariſing from that relation, as it is revealed in the goſpel, and is required of all men, who ſeek after future happineſs. A care which, however contrary to the uſual policy of maſters, would be the moſt probable means of making ſlaves diligent and faithful; for it would awaken conſcience within them, to be a ſtrict overſeer, and a ſevere monitor, whom they could not evade. This is a conſequence, that if duly conſidered, might induce even thoſe who, neglecting to take Providence into the account, conſider only how they ſhall make the moſt of their ſtock, to afford their ſlaves opportunities of learning their duty; allowing them, for example, ſome portion of the week for procuring their ſubſiſtence, and ſetting the Lord's day apart for religious inſtruction.

Still granting that maſters, who look no farther than preſent profit, may laugh at the far-fetched expectation, ſurely men who believe in revelation cannot indulge a doubt but that the

the treating of them like fellow-creatures, and the ſhewing of mercy to their ſouls, will on the whole more advance the maſter's real intereſt, than a method which ſuffers them to continue in brutiſh ignorance of themſelves and their Creator; which obliges them to labour for the ſupport of their bodies, on a day ſet apart for the improvement of their ſouls.

I know in this caſe it is argued, "to ſuppoſe "that the work of five days may poſſibly be "found as profitable to owners, as that of ſix "days, is to expect that God will work a "miracle to reward the indulgence; an ex-"traordinary exertion of power, which on ſo "trivial an occaſion, it would be preſumptuous "to look for." But when in any ſituation, we doubt God's juſtice or goodneſs, we injure his power and wiſdom, for theſe act under their influence. And when we imagine him reſting at a diſtance, or acting only in great events, we entertain improper notions of his relation to the work of his own hands. Scripture and reaſon, when they contemplate the Divine nature, join to repreſent him as ever preſent to all his works, as quickening every thing that liveth, upholding whatever hath a being, as directing the operations of nature, and guiding the actions of men, all to their proper purpoſes, in a manner indeed that we cannot compre-

comprehend; but ſo, that a ſparrow falls not to the ground without his permiſſion, and that a cup of cold water given for his ſake, doth not eſcape his notice, nor go without its reward; yet in a manner, which leaves unreſtrained that liberty, by which moral agents become accountable for their actions. And if this be the ſtate of things, under God's government, can we doubt of *their* recompenſe, who, in conformity to God's injunctions laid on our firſt parents, and ſince often renewed, allow themſelves and their dependents leiſure, on the Lord's day, to learn their Creator's will, and pay him a rational homage and duty? Humbly to believe and expect this, as declared to us in God's general promiſes in ſcripture, is an inſtance of faith that we cannot refuſe to his veracity, who has engaged to perform it.

Even were we unable to conceive a particular method, by which a compenſation for this relinquiſhed part of our ſervants labour could be effected, when we on that account conclude, that the obedience will reflect no benefit on us, we diſtruſt God's promiſes, or doubt of his ability to find a way to reward our compliance with his will. And yet, without working a manifeſt miracle, God may give ſucceſs to our endeavours, in a thouſand ways, which ſhall ſeem to be the natural effects of induſtry, or that unknown

unknown direction of human affairs, which in common account is called chance. He may make us ſkilful in managing occaſions, ſagacious in foreſeeing events. He may preſerve us from expenſive illneſs, guard us from miſchievous neighbours. He may bleſs us with faithful ſervants. He may incline mens affections to us, and make them inſtruments in promoting our proſperity. Endleſs are the methods by which, in an unperceived manner, he can turn the common accidents of life to reward men who prefer duty to preſent advantage, who co-operate with his benevolence in promoting the happineſs of their follow-creatures.

To doubt of a reward, even in this world, whenever it ſhall be, on the whole, beſt for us, is to doubt of the propriety and efficacy of prayer, and to cut off our hopes of its ſucceſs. Yet God invites us to make our requeſts known unto him, and ſolemnly promiſes, that when we aſk we ſhall receive. That it will be ſo, even in this life, we may poſitively conclude, if we conſider only the conſequence of this juſt reflection, "What is called the ordinary courſe of "Providence, which governs events, is not the "effect of blind chance, of uncontroulable "fate, but a wiſe and orderly chain of cauſes and "effects, adapted by the Almighty contriver, "as nicely to the conduct of free agents, as

"to

" to the inſtincts of brutes, or the laws of vege-
" table and inanimate matter."

It is owned even by men who conſider ſlaves as property, and who, having bought them, conclude that they have a right to make the moſt of their money, that the working of ſlaves beyond their ability, ſhortens their lives, and checks their population. Do not ſuch men acknowledge in this, ſtrong traces of Divine juſtice, puniſhing cruelty and thirſt of gain by the moſt natural means, by making them counteract and defeat their own purpoſe. And by parity of reaſoning may we not expect Providence to proſper by means as natural, our humane, benevolent attention to wretches, whom the crimes and avarice of ſelfiſh men have placed in our power? With reſpect to religion, unleſs we deny revelation to be a bleſſing, or benefit to mankind, we cannot hold ourſelves blameleſs, if we forbear uſing our beſt endeavours to communicate the knowledge of it to every one within our reach. And whatever may be our ſucceſs in other reſpects, the pains that we uſe to improve the minds of our fellow creatures, will return with advantage into our own boſoms. God's grace will be ſtirred up within us, and our own diſpoſition and behaviour will be corrected and amended.

Introduc-

Introductory Addreſs, in Anſwer to the preceding Letter.

I have peruſed with attention, your humane and pious remarks on the treatment of ſlaves in the Britiſh colonies. I think myſelf honoured by your ſuppoſing me, in particular, capable of being influenced in my behaviour towards them, by a conſideration ſo benevolent, as a reſpect to their moral improvement, and their eternal welfare. In return, allow me to think highly of the heart, that with a good will, in which the meaneſt and moſt diſtant of your kind have a ſhare, can, in the cauſe of humanity and religion, thus warmly intereſt you for ſuch unpitied, and deſpiſed objects as our ſlaves in general are.

An account which may be depended on, in a matter wherein humanity is nearly concerned, cannot be unſatisfactory to a mind, turned like yours to all the tender feelings. And though I fear the emotions which this account muſt naturally raiſe in your breaſt, will not be of the cheerful kind, yet I doubt not of its producing reflections, which you would not willingly have been without. An humble reſignation to the meaſures of Providence, is our duty at all times; but then eſpecially, when our concern for God's glory, and our brother's eternal welfare, ſeems to mark out an object of our wiſhes and

and prayers, which God is pleaſed to keep reſerved among the hidden things of his government, till his own good time ſhall come to reveal, and give it to the world.

I wiſh indeed, for your eaſe, that I could have comprehended any tolerable view of the ſubject, within more moderate limits; but it became complex under my hands, and drew after it a variety of conſiderations. Happy ſtill ſhould I have thought myſelf, could I have made this view, ſuch as it is, expreſs what you charitably wiſh it might unfold; could I inform you, that we are careful of the bodies, and tender of the ſouls of theſe our fellow-creatures, thus ſubmitted to our power, thus abandoned to our humanity. But truth requires a different, a mournful tale of unconcern and unfeeling neglect.

To make this view more complete, I ſhall firſt conſider the ſeveral natural and artificial ranks that take place in ſocial life, and more particularly that of maſter and ſlave in the European colonies. I ſhall ſhew how much the public will be profited, and how much the maſter would gain, by advancing ſlaves in ſocial life. I ſhall ſhew how this advancement in ſociety, and their improvement in religion, muſt neceſſarily go hand in hand, and aſſiſt each other, if either one, or both theſe purpoſes, be our view reſpecting them. As extravagance

and

and avarice have begun of late to make ſad encroachments on that reſt of the ſabbath, which hitherto had been reckoned ſacred; in addition to your pious reaſons for ſetting it apart for the purpoſes of religion; I ſhall prove how much this inconſiderate robbery hurts the maſter's own intereſt. I ſhall aſſert the claim of the Negroes to attention from us, by explaining their natural capacity, and proving them to be on a footing of equality in reſpect of the reception of mental improvement, with the natives of any other country. And in concluſion I ſhall lay down a plan for their improvement, and converſion.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. I. OF THE VARIOUS RANKS IN SOCIAL LIFE. Page 1

Sect. 1. The Ranks into which the Members of a Community neceſſarily ſeparate. - - - - 4
Sect. 2. Maſter and Slave in ancient Times. - - - - - 17
Sect. 3. Maſter and Slave in Gothic Times. - - - - - 25
Sect. 4. Maſter and Slave as propoſed by Fletcher for Scotland, Anno 1698. 32
Sect. 5. Maſter and Slave in the French Colonies. - - - - - 45
Sect. 6. Maſter and Slave in the Britiſh Colonies. - - - - - 53
Sect. 7. Maſter and Slave in particular Inſtances - - - - - 78

CHAP. II.

CHAP. II. THE ADVANCEMENT OF SLAVES WOULD AUGMENT THEIR SOCIAL IMPORTANCE. Page 88

Sect. 1. Their preſent Importance in Society as Slaves - - - 91

Sect. 2. Their preſent Importance in Society would be increaſed by Freedom. - - - - 97

Sect. 3. Their Maſters would be profited by their Advancement. - 101

Sect. 4. Their Maſters would be profited by allowing them the Privilege of a Weekly Sabbath - - 111

CHAP. III. THE ADVANCEMENT OF SLAVES MUST ACCOMPANY THEIR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. Page 129

Sect. 1. Examples of the Difficulty found in inſtructing them *in their preſent State.* - - - 132

Sect. 2. The Obſtacles that the Moravian Miſſions have had to ſtruggle with. - - - - 138

Sect. 3. Inefficacy of the Author's private Attempts to inſtruct Slaves. 143

Sect. 4. Inefficacy of the Author's public Attempts to inſtruct Slaves. 178

Sect. 5.

Page

Sect. 5. The Manner ſuggeſted, in which private Attempts on large Plantations to improve Slaves may probably ſucceed. - - 155

CHAP. IV. NATURAL CAPACITY OF AFRICAN SLAVES VINDICATED. Page 168

Sect. 1. Objections to African Capacity drawn from Philoſophy, conſidered. ib.
Sect. 2. Objections to African Capacity drawn from Form, conſidered. - 179
Sect. 3. Objections to African Capacity drawn from Anatomy, conſidered. 187
Sect. 4. Objections to African Capacity drawn from Obſervation, conſidered. 197
Sect. 5. African Capacity vindicated from Experience. 206

CHAP. V. PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND CONVERSION OF AFRICAN SLAVES. Page 225

Sect. 1. Eſtabliſhment of Clergy, and their Duty among Slaves. - 227
Sect. 2. General Improvement of Slaves. 234
Sect. 3. Privileges granted, and Police extended to Slaves. - - 241
Concluſion. - - - - 249

ESSAY

ON THE

TREATMENT AND CONVERSION

OF

AFRICAN SLAVES

IN THE

BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES.

CHAP. I.

Of the various Ranks in Social Life.

THERE is a natural inequality, or diverſity, which prevails among men that fits them for ſociety, enables them to fill up all the different offices of poliſhed life, and forms their varied abilities, nay, even their particular defects and wants, into a firm band of union. Where the arrangement of theſe varied attributes in man is conducted in ſociety by the views of nature, or the dictates of revelation which explain and inforce them, there the feel-

ings and intereſts of the weaker, or inferior members, are conſulted equally with thoſe of the ſtronger or ſuperior. Each man takes that ſtation for which nature intended him; and his rights are fenced around, and his claims are reſtrained, by laws preſcribed by the Author of nature: for He is the only rightful legiſlator; and human regulations are in a moral ſenſe binding, only when they can be traced immediately, or in principle, to this pure origin. As the creation of man had the general improvement and happineſs of the race in view, every law that reſpects him muſt ſuppoſe an attention to this purpoſe of his being, and therefore cannot regard the intereſt of one at the expence of another. All, as far as is conſiſtent with general good, muſt be left to the free uſe of their powers and acquiſitions, or of life, liberty, and property. In the uſe of theſe, within the limits of law, conſiſts the only equality that can take place among men; and it is evident that the extent of this uſe muſt vary according to the different ſituation of each individual, and the capacity, or power of exertion, which he poſſeſſeth, and farther muſt be affected by the ſtate of improvement, that the community, of which he is a member, has attained.

Oppoſed to this law of nature, and of God, that gives and ſecures to every man the rights adapted to his particular ſtation in ſociety, ſtands the

the artificial, or unnatural relation of maſter and ſlave; where power conſtitutes right; where, according to the degree of his capacity of coercion, every man becomes his own legiſlator, and erects his intereſt, or his caprice, into a law for regulating his conduct to his neighbour. And as the one draws its origin from the heavenly fountain of benevolence, ſo the other may be traced to the infernal enemy of all goodneſs. For here no mutual benefit is conſulted, but every wiſh, every feeling, is ſubmitted to the mandate of a ſelfiſh tyrant. Yet the influence of this luſt for acting the maſter has been ſo univerſal, and has obtained ſo long, as to oblige us álſo, in principle, to deduce it immediately from that love of power, which, within the boundaries preſcribed by nature, makes a part of our conſtitution; it not being poſſible to account for its having ſo generally prevailed, as we find it has in the world, on any other ſuppoſition than its being an abuſe of what is natural to mankind, excited and cheriſhed in them by an enemy to their virtue and happineſs.

For, as far back as hiſtory carries us, we read of maſter and ſlave. Even in the ſavage ſtate, cuſtom, which leaves men on a footing of equality, has enſlaved wives. Among our negro ſlaves, he who cannot attach to himſelf a wife, or ſubdue any other creature, buys

ſome half ſtarved dog, over whom he may exerciſe his tyrannic diſpoſition. If theſe be the unalienable claims of human nature, and this the practice of mankind oppoſed to them, how neceſſary muſt it be to fix ſuch boundaries, as may preſerve the rights of the weak from the incroachments of the ſtrong. And this cannot be done in a more effectual manner, than by drawing the natural, and the artificial ſtate of ſociety, each in its proper colours, and leaving the deciſion to the common ſenſe of mankind.

SECT. I.

The Ranks into which the Members of a Community neceſſarily ſeparate.

IN every independent ſtate, whether monarchy or republic, that has got beyond the firſt ſteps of civilization, the people, or citizens, naturally divide into ſovereign and ſubject, maſter and family, employer and employed; all other ranks being arbitrary or artificial.

The ſovereign declares and executes the will of the people at large. He muſt therefore be ſupreme, or uncontroulable by any particular number, or part of the people. His authority muſt extend over all ranks, comprehend all poſſible caſes, and conclude every particular diſtrict. In this ſenſe he is arbitrary, or in-

truſted

truſted with the power of enacting and abrogating laws, within the limits which man's conſtitution, and the dictates of morality preſcribe. But as the ſovereign, whether hereditary or elective, permanent or temporary, one or many acting together in one body, is intruſted with this power for the benefit of the people, which ſuppoſeth it to be exerciſed for the general good; therefore the law, or will of the ſovereign, ſhould be declared in general terms, that it may affect individuals only by inference in particular caſes, and conclude the perſon of the ſovereign in his ordinary conduct, and individual capacity, equally with the ſubject. *

It is the general purpoſe of every government, that, in extraordinary caſes, conſtitutes the people judges of their ſovereign's conduct, and juſtifies them in reſuming a power, which in

* This circumſtance is carried to a great length in the Britiſh conſtitution with the happieſt effects. The Houſe of Peers helps to compoſe the legiſlature; but each member, as an individual, continues ſubject to the laws. The Houſe of Commons poſſeſſes, for a time limited, a ſhare in the legiſlation; but each repreſentative is a private citizen, under the operation of the laws; and, after a time, the whole mixes with the maſs of the people, to obey, as ſubjects, thoſe ſtatutes that they had aſſiſted to frame. The perſon of the king alone, out of reſpect to his office, is not made the object of coercive law. It is this mixed character of legiſlator and citizen in our rulers that makes authority compatible with freedom; not the particular proportion of thoſe who have the privilege of electing them, or their numbers, or the period for which they may have been choſen.

in reſpect of its end, muſt be conſidered as delegated. Such a caſe happened at the revolution. But the occaſion may ſafely continue to be left, as it was then, to the feelings of the people. Deſigning men, otherwiſe unable to work themſelves into notice, are, under the maſk of patriotiſm, ſo ready to ſet up, at every trifle, a clamour againſt government, to enhance their price, or pave the way to their own ambition, that a virtuous citizen will not eaſily ſuffer himſelf to be drawn in to join the cry.

A free ſtate, then, is that in which known laws bind equally ſovereign and ſubject. A proclamation forbidding the exportation of grain is an act of power, reſting on the propriety of the meaſure. A vote of credit is as illegal a manner of raiſing money on the ſubject, as was formerly ſhip-money, or a benevolence; though it may not be followed by all their bad conſequences. Both ſhew a defect in the conſtitution, which wants to be corrected by a general law, preſcribing the proper conduct in particular exigencies. The law that ſhut up Boſton Port was hard, becauſe particular. A law to ſhut up every port, where the revenue laws are reſiſted, would be juſt and equitable. Thus might a dictatorial authority, (I mean a latent power to be occaſionally called forth) which is neceſſary in every ſtate, be eſtabliſhed on a legal foundation,

foundation, and be kept from tranſgreſſing its due bounds. *

Families are, in the detail, what communities are at large, except that the head, or maſter of the family, having a kind of property, either continued or temporary, in all under his roof, governs by the dictates of diſcretion, rather than by known laws. Still the good, even of the loweſt member of the family, muſt be a co-operating principle. And that family, whoſe government approaches neareſt to the regular method, which preſcribed known rules ſuppoſe, where the claims, and duty, or buſineſs, of each individual is diſtinctly aſcertained, will, on the whole, be beſt managed, and allow the perſons compoſing it to enjoy the greateſt poſſible freedom in their ſtations.

In

* The caſes, for which it is neceſſary to provide a dictatorial power, may eaſily be foreſeen, and be provided for in one general ſtatute, to be binding till the legiſlature can be aſſembled to deliberate on the ſubject. The circumſtances that make it proper to ſuſpend the Habeas Corpus Act, to open or ſhut the ports, to lay embargoes, to give a vote of credit, may eaſily be enumerated. But arbitrary undefined power has charms too alluring to be reſigned by any, who find themſelves in poſſeſſion of it. Even our Houſe of Commons, while acting as guardian of the privileges of the people, chooſes to ſubmit its right of commitment, in caſes of contempt, to the capricious deciſion of any ordinary magiſtrate, rather than permit the circumſtances of the claim to be defined by a poſitive law.

In this light the rank of maſter and ſervant is comprehended in that of family; ſervants, as a part of the family, are ſubject to its rules, and, as contributing to its eaſe, are intitled to its advantages. But as the agreement between the maſter and ſervant is voluntary, preſcribing the duty on one ſide, and aſcertaining the wages on the other, it may likewiſe be conſidered under the head of employer and employed. The want, at firſt view, appears to be reciprocal; but cuſtom has univerſally affixed to property the idea of ſuperiority over perſonal ability, or labour. It is in this particular view, of emolument of office, that magiſtrates may be ſaid to be the ſervants of the people, though when their authority, and not their maintenance, is conſidered, they may be ſaid to partake of ſovereignty.

The poſſeſſing of materials, or a ſubject to be improved for uſe by the ſkill or labour of another, ſuppoſeth in the poſſeſſor a right to preſcribe the manner in which that ſkill is to be exerciſed, or that labour performed; and on allowing a certain reward or advantage to the man, thus employed, to appropriate to his (the poſſeſſor's) own uſe the labour, or improved materials. This ſuperiority is balanced on the ſide of the workman, by his being free to refuſe or accept the condition. It varies with the demand for labour, and with the number of

of thoſe, who offer themſelves to the work; but mutual want and mutual utility is the band that connects them together.

Similar to this, is the relation between the mechanic, or artizan, and his cuſtomer. The artizan provides his own materials, and works for public: yet, though he ſets his own price on his workmanſhip; and the cuſtomer, without having made a previous bargain, can only refuſe or agree to the condition, the conſideration of having given occaſion for the employment, in moſt caſes, transfers the ſuperiority to the cuſtomer.

In the caſe of the learned profeſſions, there is, indeed, ſome variety; but the like analogy of employment on the one ſide, and encouragement on the other, runs through the whole. Particular perſons ſtudy, and make themſelves acquainted with ſciences, that are generally uſeful, with a view of being employed by the public, and of drawing a maintenance, and deriving diſtinction from the exerciſe of their ſeveral profeſſions.

Religion, independent of its relation to the Supreme Being, is ſo neceſſary to ſupply the defect of law, and to inforce obedience to government by the influence of conſcience, that hitherto, in every poliſhed ſtate, it has made a part of the conſtitution; and becauſe it

is apt to be perverted to bad purpoſes, by ill deſigning men, its profeſſors have always been an important object of the public attention.* They are ſettled in every little corner of the ſtate as monitors, or cenſors of the people, and they have their maintenance aſcertained out of the labours of thoſe, whom they are appointed to exhort and inſtruct. Their ſupport cannot, any more than that of the magiſtrates, be left by government to the voluntary choice of the people, becauſe thoſe, who moſt need to be controuled by the miniſtry of both, favour their inſtitution leaſt, and would be far from contributing willingly to their maintenance. It would be unjuſt to expect, that the good citizen ſhould alone be taxed to ſupport that magiſtrate, whom the conduct of the bad renders eſpecially neceſſary; or that the pious man alone ſhould contribute to maintain that miniſter, who, as far as reſpects the ſtate, is eſtabliſhed chiefly to moderate the profligacy of the vicious. The loweſt members of the ſtate, men inſenſible of the neceſſity of eſtabliſhments, and generally unable

* If it be objected, that the original conſtitution of ſeveral of the American provinces is an exception; it may be anſwered, that theſe provinces were ſettled under the protection of a ſtate, of whoſe conſtitution an eſtabliſhed religion made an eſſential part; and, at a period, when the hopes and fears of futurity had a general influence, independent of public eſtabliſhments; and that they have not had a length of time, or, till within theſe few laſt years, been in circumſtances to ſhew the genuine effects of ſuch a peculiarity.

unable to contribute to them, yet at the ſame time objects of them, and poſſeſſing importance ſufficient to demand the public care, are the great conſideration in the inſtitution of magiſtrate and miniſter. The public, therefore, muſt eſtabliſh equally, and maintain both. The clergy, by their eſtabliſhment, become ſervants of the public, for promoting order and good conduct among the people, by the hopes and fears of religion. As ſuch they have their duty preſcribed, and their maintenance, and rights, aſcertained by law; which fixes the limits of each, and prevents their encroachments.

Men are ſo attentive to whatever regards their health, or property; and the emoluments, and diſtinction, which accompany eminence in the profeſſions relating to them, encourage ſuch numbers to apply to them, that government has ſeldom been obliged to meddle with the practice of law or phyſic. A man applies to that phyſician, or lawyer, who has his confidence; and he muſt exert ſkill and addreſs to preſerve that diſtinction. Here the dependence and utility are reciprocal, and adequate to the purpoſe. Theſe profeſſions, though a conſequence of ſociety, yet reſpect each man chiefly as an individual; on this account, except in flagrant abuſes, they are ſafely left to private intereſt; and private exertion. But religion, in its eſtabliſhment, reſpecting

reſpecting chiefly public order, and private improvement only as far as it is ſubſidiary to the other, its profeſſors are conſidered as auxiliaries to the magiſtrate, and thus, being ſervants of the ſtate, are ſupported at the public charge.

In the profeſſion of arms there is ſomething more particular; but ſtill the general analogy takes place. In it one part of the community comes under certain engagements for the preſervation of the whole; but the exigency is ſuppoſed to be preſſing, and the purpoſe national. When it is neceſſary to eſtabliſh an army, the ſoldier becomes obliged to obey his general. Here the ſoldier protects himſelf, his family, his country: and to do this with effect, he ſubmits to ſuch orders as are conducive to that end; and in the exerciſe of his duty his country cares for, and maintains, him. He, therefore, is alſo the ſervant of the public, and, as ſuch, is employed, and maintained by it; being as neceſſary, in time of peace, to preſerve the little police that licentiouſneſs has ſuffered to remain among us, as, in time of war, to defend us from our enemies.

Now in the caſe of the laws, which reſpect government and people, the rule is general, fixed, and known, and equally binds the ſovereign and citizen. Prejudice, caprice, or intereſt, cannot ſingle out an individual to tyrannize

tyrannize over him. In the caſe of a family, its ſtrict union and affection bind it in one common intereſt, and cauſe the members to rejoice or ſuffer together. In the caſe of the labourer or artizan, he being at liberty to accept or refuſe an offer from a particular employer or cuſtomer, and this laſt being alſo free in making his agreement, and obliged to comply with it, when determined on; theſe conditions ſecure both parties equally from injury and oppreſſion. In the learned profeſſions, the like circumſtances produce ſimilar effects. Even in the profeſſion of arms an equality is preſerved in the compact, and ſentiment and honours compenſate for the reſignation of ſome of the privileges of citizenſhip.

But in the arbitrary relation of maſter and ſlave, no law reſtrains the one, no election or compact ſecures the other. The maſter may invade the deareſt rights of humanity, and trample on the plaineſt rules of juſtice; the ſlave cannot change his tyrant, or remonſtrate againſt the impropriety, perhaps impoſſibility, of his taſk.

The authority which men allow to the laws that govern them, has its foundation in general utility, and the reaſon of things: and as all law is, or ought to be founded on our conſtitution, it, according to what has been obſerved, draws its ultimate

ultimate ſanction from the God of nature, and thus intereſts conſcience in the obedience due to it. Here the equality and comprehenſiveneſs of the rule ſecure the individual from oppreſſion; he can be affected only together with the community, or when he puts himſelf in the caſe forbidden generally by the law. Hence it is that all Bills of Attainder muſt carry oppreſſion and injuſtice in their very form, being calculated not for general utility or prevention, as laws ſhould be, but for particular deſtruction; not for guarding againſt crimes, but for creating them. The deference claimed by the employer or cuſtomer, and the reſpect paid by, or to the learned profeſſions, according to the rank of the perſons concerned, have their foundation in the regard ſhewn to wealth, learning, or power; and their exceſs is guarded againſt by the nature of the compact, and the power of aſſent lodged with the labourer, artizan, or inferior perſon. Now as far as the deference reſpecting the employer extends, it ſuppoſeth as real a ſuperiority, limited only in its operation to the deſign thereof, as that of maſter over ſlave; and as it ariſeth from the ranks into which ſociety univerſally ſeparates men, it may be called ſocial ſervitude, which muſt take place in the freeſt ſtate.*

Here

* In the conteſt between Britain and America, it may be remarked, that the friends of the latter contended not for the equality

Here the ſervant makes his compact with the maſter, or ſuperior, and frames it to agree with his feelings, and to fall in with his abilities; and when the terms of his agreement are fulfilled, his time and his enjoyments are in his own power. But in the ſlavery of our colonies, the larger part of the community is literally ſacrificed to the leſs; their time, their feelings, their perſons, are ſubject to the intereſt, the caprice, the ſpite of maſters and their ſubſtitutes, without remedy, without recompence, without proſpects. This may be called artificial ſervitude, unprofitable to the public, burdenſome even to the maſter, intolerable to the ſervant, repugnant to humanity.

A law, for the purpoſe of police, may direct the ſtrength and induſtry of the citizens to a particular object; as when it encourages, by a temporary

equality of men, conſidered as individuals unconnected in ſociety, till mutual benefit brought them together, and formed the diſtinction of ranks; for in this light Americans have made as inconſiderate maſters to as miſerable ſlaves as can any where be found. But they contended for the preſent actual equality of all men, with an exception to their own ſlaves. And again, to ſupport the argument, they were obliged to ſuppoſe ſociety diſſolved, and men reduced to that ſolitary, ſavage ſtate, where ſuch equality only can take place. For ſociety cannot be maintained, even in idea, but by the inequality of condition, and the various ranks neceſſarily ariſing from the ſocial compact.—So eaſy is it for men to take ſuch parts of reaſoning as beſt ſuit their preſent purpoſe.

temporary monopoly, the eſtabliſhment of a certain ſtaple or manufacture; nay, for purpoſes which reſpect the ſtate, it may in certain points, and for a certain period, ſubject the perſon of one man to another, as in forming an army. But we cannot ſuppoſe a law that ſhall ſubject the perſon of one man to the private purpoſes of another, without once ſtipulating the extent of the authority, the nature of the ſervice, or the ſufficiency of the recompence. Such a law, by putting, perhaps, the greater part of the community out of the protection of all law, would be inconſiſtent with the notion of ſociety. For the prime deſign of ſociety is the extenſion of the operation of law and the equal treatment and protection of the citizens. Slavery, therefore, being the negation of law, cannot ariſe from law, or be compatible with it. As far as ſlavery prevails in any community, ſo far muſt that community be defective in anſwering the purpoſes of ſociety. And this we affirm to be in the higheſt degree the caſe of our colonies. Slavery, indeed, in the manner wherein it is found there, is an unnatural ſtate of oppreſſion on the one ſide, and of ſuffering on the other; and needs only to be laid open or expoſed in its native colours, to command the abhorrence and oppoſition of every man of feeling and ſentiment.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Maſter and Slave in ancient times.

WE are taught, by the higheſt authority, that Moſes adapted ſeveral of his inſtitutions to the particular diſpoſition of his countrymen. He did not attempt to prohibit ſlavery among them, perhaps, becauſe they were not then more ripe for it, than for the indiſſoluble band of matrimony; but while he allowed them to make ſlaves of the conquered Canaanites and their poſterity, he endeavoured to render their lot eaſy, and the behaviour of maſters humane. Indeed, in the early ages, it is a manner peculiar to him, and the Athenian legiſlators, (of whom hereafter) to have paid in the caſe of ſlaves a proper attention to the reſerved and unalienable rights of human nature.

He enacts, that there ſhould be one law, one rule of juſtice for the native and for the ſtranger; which is in direct oppoſition to ſome of our colony laws, where the evidence of even a free African will not be taken againſt a white man. He ſecures good uſage to the ſlave, by commanding, that if his maſter, in beating him, ſtrike out but a ſingle tooth, he ſhall have his freedom. He ordains the perſonal ſlavery of every Jew to terminate in the beginning of the ſeventh, or ſabbatical year, whether near

near at hand, or diſtant, when that commenced. He guards effectually againſt a grovèling ſlaviſh ſpirit among his people, by condemning him to perpetual ſlavery, who, inticed by kind treatment from his maſter, ſhould ſhow a diſregard of this noble privilege of the ſabbatical year. He calls repeatedly on his people to remember, that they themſelves had been ſlaves in Egypt; and, therefore, from motives of fellow-feeling ſhould make the condition of their ſlaves eaſy and agreeable to them. He bids them treat well ſtrangers of one country, becauſe they had been ſtrangers in their land; others, becauſe they were of the ſame lineage with themſelves. He tells them, that the inſtitution of a weekly ſabbath had in contemplation, the benevolent purpoſe of giving reſt to the wearied ſlave, and a reſpite from toil, even to the wearied ox.

Among thoſe nations that had not the light of revelation to direct their conduct, the Athenians deſerve the firſt place: they were indulgent, eaſy, and kind to their ſlaves, when compared with their neighbours. And well this condeſcenſion became a people, who, by mere force of genius, advanced human nature much nearer to perfection than any other nation. That their good ſenſe did not, in every particular, carry them to that equality of behaviour towards their ſlaves, which humanity might expect, or benevolence ſuggeſt, is not ſo much to be wondered at,

at, as that they ſhould be able to oppoſe the example of all their neighbours for capricious ſeverity, and in the chief lines of their conduct reſpecting ſuch ill-fated beings, ſhould give occaſion to the obſervation, that the life of a ſlave at Athens was much happier than that of a freeman in any other Grecian ſtate.

If Athenian ſlaves were treated with cruelty by their maſters, they might claim protection in the Temple of Theſeus: there they remained in ſafety till the ſubject of complaint could be tried at law. Nor, in that caſe, did the law ruin, or refuſe to relieve, thoſe whom it pretended to aſſiſt; for juſtice was diſtributed to rich and poor at the expence of the public. If the complaint of the ſlave was found to be juſt, the maſter was obliged to aſſign over his ſervice to ſome other perſon. Slaves could demand an exchange of maſters, if their maſter had made any attempt on their chaſtity. The law alſo gave them protection and remedy, in their own names and perſons, againſt every injury that might have been done them by any citizen, not their maſter.

Athenian ſlaves were not reſtrained in any of the common amuſements of ſociety. They were allowed to acquire property, on paying their maſters a certain yearly rate. If able to purchaſe their freedom, they might demand it of

of their maſter for a determined price. Their maſters ſometimes, the ſtate often, rewarded their ſervice and fidelity with freedom; in particular, after having been once employed in war, they were ſure to be made free. Contrary to the policy of modern times, the Athenians deemed no man fit to defend the ſtate, but him who was worthy to be a member of it.

The Athenians reaped the advantage of their moderation and humanity. For though, by the loweſt calculation, their country contained three grown male ſlaves for one freeman, notice is taken, in their hiſtory, of only one inſurrection among their miners; and once, in time of war, of a conſiderable number who deſerted from their maſters, and abandoned the country. On the other hand, their neighbours, the Spartans, who, through a wantonly cruel policy, were continually haraſſing, ill treating, oppreſſing, nay, to keep their hands accuſtomed to blood, butchering their ſlaves, were held in conſtant alarms by them, and often were brought into extreme danger, by their deſperate attempts to regain their liberty. Yet the condition of ſlaves among the Spartans, from the circumſtance of their being generally the property of the public, and attached to the ſoil, more readily admitted of univerſal relaxation and indulgence, than it did among the Athenians, where they were chiefly private property.

There

There is ſuch a conformity, not only in theſe, but other particulars, between the laws of Moſes, enacted during the fabulous ages of Greece, and theſe laws, eſtabliſhed in its improved ſtate, long after that time, by a people deſervedly celebrated, as the beſt cultivated, the moſt ſenſible, and humane among the ancient nations, as might have ſecured to that great man a little more reſpect than he in common meets with, among the wits and reaſoners of the preſent age; who, while they deny his divine miſſion, in that denial, muſt acknowledge his foreſight, his benevolence, his knowledge of the human heart, above every character in antiquity. For his laws continue, at this day, to be obeyed by a conſiderable people, in the moſt inconvenient circumſtances, while all other laws of former ages are loſt in the gulph of time, or are only to be found in fragments in old neglected books.*

In the infant ſtate of Rome, ſlaves worked, and lived with their maſters, without much diſtinction

* Even the law that abſolves a maſter for ſlaying his ſlave, in the caſe of his not dying till two days after the ſtroke, bears a ſtrong analogy to that tenderneſs in the common law of England, that diſtinguiſhes between homicide and murder, and, as it were loth to find the culprit guilty, takes the deadlineſs of the weapon into account; and it ſhews, that among the Jews, the magiſtrate interpoſed between the maſter and his ſlave; which, in ſome of our colonies, has not been the caſe, even when ſhocking circumſtances of murder have loudly called for it.

diſtinction of rank or uſage. But in proportion as luxury increaſed among the Romans, the condition of their ſlaves ſunk gradually down to the loweſt degree of wretchedneſs and miſery. And indeed ſuch repreſentations as the ſtatue of the dying gladiator, which exhibits the life of a brave uſeful man ſacrificed, not to the ſafety of his country, but to the barbarous whim of, perhaps, the moſt worthleſs ſet of men that ever were aſſembled together in one place;* the ſcandalous traffic that the elder Cato carried on in the natural feelings of his ſlaves, his ſetting them adrift to ſtarve in their old age,† when

* In what an amiable point of view doth the following incident place the Athenians, even in their latter degenerate ſtate? Some ſycophants of the Romans, then their maſters, had propoſed to them, in a public aſſembly, to imitate their lords, in the exhibition of ſhows of prize fighters, and gladiators in their theatres. A worthy citizen, who was preſent, affected to applaud the flattering meaſure, and requeſted his fellow-citizens only firſt to accompany him and help him to throw down the altar, which, in their better times, they had erected to mercy. That ſenſible people felt immediately the grave rebuke; and were the only ſtate in Greece, that had courage to forbear imitating the barbarity of their conquerors.

† How inconſiſtent with himſelf is man. He, who, in his own conduct, could debaſe himſelf by ſuch acts of meanneſs and cruelty, when Cenſor, degraded Lucius, the brother of Flaminius, becauſe he had indulged the capricious curioſity of a favourite boy, with the ſcene of a man dying a violent death, in the perſon of a ſlave, whom, for that purpoſe, he ſlew with his own hand.—The traffic referred to above, was his locking up his female ſlaves, and hiring them out, by the night, to ſuch males as could lay down a certain price for them.

when they could no longer be ſerviceable to him, the condemning of them to fiſh-ponds for trivial faults; all theſe things muſt fill every reflecting man with ſuch abhorrence of, and indignation at, the conduct of the Romans, in the character of maſters, in their advanced ſtate of empire, as muſt prove them unworthy of being drawn into example, except to be execrated for their conduct. While they fancied themſelves lords of the world, they forgot that they were men; while they indulged their amuſement, they ſtifled their humanity. Indeed, what could be expected from a people capable of receiving a law, that, according to the uſual interpretation of it, in a caſe of inſolvency, ordained a fellow-citizen to be cut piece-meal, and be divided among his creditors?

But how miſerable the condition of ſlaves in general was among the ancients, may be collected from the opinion and example of that benevolent and diſcreet philoſopher, Plutarch, who yet has very freely cenſured the inhuman behaviour of others. He aſſures us, that the only effectual way of managing a ſlave is by the diſcipline of the whip; that a ſlave is incapable of underſtanding any arguments, except ſtripes, and a chain. And agreeably to this opinion he is introduced to us, as in a characteriſtic action of his life, ſhewing how coolly a philoſopher could flea the back of a poor friendleſs,

friendleſs, helpleſs wretch.* Farther, Demoſthenes, who, in every thing reſpecting the freedom, and character of his country, ſeems inſpired with the very genius of liberty, lays it down as a maxim not to be controverted, that the higheſt evidence, and teſtimony moſt to be depended on, is what is forced out of a ſlave by torture.

Adrian is the firſt on record, who, by an edict, deprived the maſter of the power of life and death in his family. As the benevolence of the Chriſtian religion, about his time, had ſecretly, yet univerſally, inſinuated itſelf into the ſentiments, and tinctured the reaſoning, of the learned; and as he was more fond of the title

* The hiſtory is this: He had ordered the ſlave to be corrected. The fellow muttered; and obſerved, that a man, like his maſter, who pretended to act the Philoſopher, and to hold all his paſſions and affections equally poiſed, behaved in a manner unbecoming his character, when, on any poſſible provocation, he fell into ſuch a paſſion with a poor ſlave, as could be ſatiated only by flaſhing and cutting him unmercifully with a whip. Plutarch, quibbling with the wretch, obſerves, in anſwer, that paſſion generally had marks by which its preſence was denoted: an elevated tone, a flufhing countenance, a threatening look; could he have any of theſe, or the violence that they expreſſed, who argued the matter with all the calmneſs of a ſtoic. And as the executioner had interrupted his ſtrokes, waiting for the iſſue of the diſcourſe, he coolly bids him proceed in his method of inculcating knowledge by the whip, while he and Syrus diſcuſſed the ſubject philoſophically. But a man muſt have ſpent ſome time in the ſouthern provinces of North America, or our ſugar colonies, to be able to imagine the ſcene.

title of Philoſopher than of Emperor, it is beyond conjecture, that this edict, at that particular time, owed its origin to revealed religion; and within a ſhort period after this, perſonal ſlavery, by the ſame influence, was aboliſhed throughout the empire. *

SECT. III.

Maſter and Slave in Gothic Times.

THE inundation of the northern nations, that broke into the Roman Empire, and the feudal tenures that were introduced by it, gave riſe to a new ſpecies of ſlavery in Europe, the remains of which are yet to be found, particularly

* Raynall aſſerts, that the abolition of ſlavery and Paganiſm, by edict, in the time of Conſtantine, brought on the ruin of the Roman Empire. Doubtleſs every violent change in a ſtate, muſt bring danger with it. But, perhaps, it will be difficult for any, but a modern philoſopher, who follows Hume in his paradoxes, to conceive how the extenſion of ſentiment and freedom ſhould ſpread ruin among a people. That empire had begun to nod to its fall, long before this change could have produced any effect. The univerſal degeneracy of manners, the contempt of religion, the prevalence of Epicurean notions, the diſregard of national character, the effeminacy of the ſoldiers, their loſs of diſcipline, the inſtability of the government, and the natural courſe of human grandeur, are ſufficient to account for the downfal of that fabric, under the rude ſhock of ſurrounding ſavages. That Chriſtianity produced this effect of aboliſhing ſlavery, is the opinion alſo of Fletcher; for which ſee Sect. IV. of this chapter.

cularly in Denmark and Poland. But it appears, that, in general, this ſlavery conſiſted in obliging the conquered nations to cultivate their own lands, and render to the conquerors ſuch a part of the produce as they thought proper to aſcertain. This condition naturally connected the labourers with the ſoil which they cultivated; and it roſe into a cuſtom to transfer them together from one proprietor to another: and, doubtleſs, there were many reduced alſo to the condition of domeſtic ſlaves. But, like the Swediſh priſoners made at the battle of Pultowa, they became the teachers and reformers of their maſters. And as theſe were by degrees converted to religion and won to civilized life, ſo this ſtate of ſubordination went on approaching gradually to the condition of equality, or rather of that reciprocal ſocial dependence, which we have ſhewn muſt exiſt between the ſervant and maſter. And among the many ſad things that we every day hear of popes, prieſts, and prieſtcraft, this muſt be acknowledged to their credit, (they are indeed charged with it by their enemies) that their influence was conſtantly uſed with the converts, to procure the manumiſſion, or at leaſt the humane treatment of their ſlaves. Such has been conſtantly the natural effect of Chriſtianity, in every poſſible form, to favour perſonal as well as mental liberty, till the gradual improvement of ſociety, the extenſion of ſentiment, and fluctuation of property, become

come ſufficient to change perſonal ſlavery into a voluntary compact of ſervice and fidelity on the one ſide, of wages and protection on the other: a compact, which ſuppoſeth that ſtate of mutual dependence eſſential to poliſhed ſociety, and which may be conſidered as entering originally into the plan thereof, and I truſt is not intirely out of ſight in the caſe of which we treat.*

Indeed this latter ſlavery, in its worſt ſtate, muſt, after the converſion of the maſters, have been far preferable to the ancient ſlavery of the heathens, or the modern ſlavery of the negroes in the European colonies. The Chriſtian ſlaves of Chriſtian maſters were conſidered as entitled to certain rights, on which a maſter could not encroach: particularly, the making of the ceremony of marriage a religious ſolemnity, and its obligations of conſequence indiſſoluble, except by death, drew after it all the claims and rights of a family. Their worſhipping at the ſame altar, and their being conſidered as entitled, equally with their maſters, to all the ſpiritual advantages annexed to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, were circumſtances which the prieſts were careful to uſe to the beſt advantage in their

* The Banians in India are at this day, ſupplied with ſlaves from Abyſſinia. But as ſoon as they are brought home, they are treated as children of the family; they are inſtructed in ſome uſeful trade; they are allowed to raiſe families, and maintain them with the profits of their labour, with which the maſter meddles not.

their favour: and, in an age, wherein the promiſes and threats of religion influenced, at leaſt, the outward conduct of the people, and its doctrines made generally a part of the reaſoning in uſe; * when its miniſters were held in honour, and their injunctions carried with them reverence and authority for their Maſter's ſake, theſe were effectual and prevailing topics. The people alſo reaped advantages from theſe diſputes between the kings and their barons. Kings favoured the liberty of burghers and peaſants, becauſe every individual abſolved of his allegiance to a baron, was an auxiliary detached from an enemy or rival lord. †

Had Europe, as a much diſtinguiſhed quarter of the globe, reaped no other ſocial advantage from the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity than the abolition

* This is exceedingly well exemplified in what is called the truce of God or the church, when the ſabbaths, and ſolemn times, and feſtivals of the church, gave a reſpite to thoſe cruel depredations and murders that each village-tyrant or lord of a caſtle, thoſe former ſelf-erected legiſlators, thought himſelf permitted, at other times, to perpetrate among his neighbours.

† Though, in many caſes, this was only changing one tyrant for another; yet the people favoured the meaſure, becauſe they have conſtantly found an oppreſſor intolerable in the inverſe ratio of his rank and extent of power. "A poor man, "oppreſſing the poor," ſaith Solomon, "is like a ſweeping "rain," he leaves no food. To give ſecurity to the members of any ſtate, the community muſt be of that extent and power which will make it reſpectable among its neighbours; and its governors muſt be removed ſo far from the level of other citizens, that private intereſt or reſentment may not ſenſibly influence their public conduct. But this can hardly ever be the caſe in ſmall ſtates.

abolition of ſlavery, this benefit alone would have been immenſe; the ſuperiority gained by it over the reſt of the world would have been incredible. And with what ſhame and ſorrow muſt we remark, that ſhe, who has been raiſed ſo high above her fellows, by the influence of this heaven-deſcended liberty, at this day is, and, for more than two centuries paſt, has been, ſtriving with all the venturous energy of a commercial ſpirit, to eſtabliſh ſlavery in the new world; in a region, where the curſe of ſlavery was unknown, till, through an infernal love of gold, ſhe introduced and fixed it? But when the Engliſh, (for though the Portugueſe and Spaniards had tranſported Africans more early to their American ſettlements; yet Hawkins, an Engliſhman, is ſaid firſt to have given occaſion for the preſent inhuman trade) a nation moſt highly favoured of liberty, is viewed as taking the lead in this odious traffic, and as bending down the ſoul in utter darkneſs, the more effectually to enſlave the body; freedom muſt bluſh indignantly, while humanity mourns over the reproachful tale.* Would God we might indulge

* It muſt fill the reader with very ſerious reflections, to be told, that, ſince the year 1759, the Britiſh African trade has been, in a great proportion, turned to the ſupplying of the French iſlands with ſlaves. This has given a moſt rapid improvement to their ſugar plantations; and there is laid a foundation for ſuch a naval force, as if not guarded againſt in time may avenge humanity on our nation for this ſhocking traffic, which it has carried on to a greater extent than all the reſt of Europe, with peculiar circumſtances of barbarity and cruelty.

indulge the hope, that the ſame people, who firſt riveted, might alſo firſt cut aſunder, the iron chain which diſgraces our nature and nation, in the weſtern world; and that a people, who have riſqued their own exiſtence, frequently, as a ſtate, to keep one continental tyrant from ridding the world of another, might at laſt have wiſdom to render themſelves rich and powerful, by reſtoring to liberty, and recovering to ſociety and reaſon, the exiled ſons of Africa.*

But

* In the month of March 1783, the following circumſtances came out in the trial of a caſe of inſurance at Guildhall. An ignorant maſter of a ſlave-ſhip had overſhot his port, Jamaica, and was afraid of wanting water before he could beat up again to the iſland. He himſelf fell ſick. In the courſe of his illneſs, he ordered his mate, who was the man that gave the evidence, to throw overboard 46 ſlaves, hand-cuffed; and he was readily obeyed. Two days after he ordered 36 more to be thrown after them, and after two days more another parcel of 40. Ten others, who had been permitted to take the air on deck, unfettered, jumped into the ſea indignantly after them. The ſhip, after all, brought into port 480 gallons of water. Can humanity imagine that it was meant, in any poſſible circumſtances, to ſubmit the fate of ſuch numbers of reaſonable creatures to the reveries of a ſick monſter; or that his brutal inſtrument ſhould dare to boaſt of his obedience, and even do it with impunity, in the higheſt criminal court of the beſt informed people of Europe?

The Incas of Peru conquered to poliſh and improve. When they came to a brutiſh people, who could not readily apprehend their inſtructions, Let us turn, ſaid they, from theſe incorrigible animals, and ſeek out a people worthy of being our ſcholars. The ſavages of America are ſo wholly without the conception of the poſſibility of one man's being ſubmitted to the

But before I conſider ſlavery as it has been introduced and eſtabliſhed by Europeans in the weſtern world, I ſhall lay before the reader a plan of that celebrated friend to liberty, Fletcher, of Saltoun, for reducing his country back into the ancient ſtate of maſter and ſlave, in order to obviate ſome temporary inconveniences imagined to ariſe from freedom. And as he does this with an appearance of reaſoning, and, indeed, ſuggeſts things that would be exceedingly proper to be attended to, in the firſt dawnings of

the will of another, that they know no medium between maſting their priſoners, and adopting them into their families. The Europeans, ſettled in the ſame country, could traverſe the vaſt Atlantic to traffic for, enſlave, and ſell, wretches unknown to them, who never injured them; nay, could keep working in iron chains their own unhappy countrymen ſent among them: while they boaſt of having vindicated for themſelves, as the natural inheritance of freedom, a total independence on all authority not originating from themſelves. Reaſon, as found in practice among men, is but a name, when ſeparated from intereſt.—It is but juſtice due to the Weſt Indian proprietors to obſerve, that the planters of tobacco and rice, in America, in common, not only treated their African ſlaves and Engliſh convicts, but even ſober, honeſt people, who, to pay for their paſſage from Europe, had been obliged to ſell their ſervice for five years, with full as much ſeverity as was practiſed only on Africans in the ſugar iſlands; and, what was inexcuſable, in a country where proviſions coſt labour only, even pinched them in their food. Indented ſervants were tied up, and laſhed cruelly on the moſt trifling occaſions. They were made to drag iron rings of ten or twelve pounds weight, hammered round their ancles, and ſleep as they could with heavy iron chains and crooks round their necks.

of liberty; I ſhall at once conſider his propoſal, and add ſuch obſervations as naturally ariſe from it.

SECT. IV.

Maſter and Slave, as propoſed for Scotland, Anno 1698.

SOON after the revolution, Scotland was afflicted with four or five ſucceſſive unfruitful years, that, in its then improvident method of agriculture, reduced it to a ſtate of famine, which is ſtill remembered under the name of the *Dear Years.* Many died of want, and thouſands, all over the country, were reduced to beggary; the Highlanders, eſpecially, ſuffered greatly, and came down and overſpread the lowlands; and, where they did not ſucceed by begging, made no ſcruple to ſteal and rob, to ſupply their wants. In this ſituation of things, when the poor were numerous, few manufactures eſtabliſhed, and the fiſheries lay neglected, did Fletcher propoſe his plan of ſlavery, founding it on a ſtatute enacted Anno 1579, which empowered any ſubject of ſufficient eſtate to take the child of any beggar, and educate him for his own ſervice, for a certain term of years, which term was extended Anno 1597 for life.

He

He obſerves, that hiſtory makes no mention of poor or beggars in ancient times, becauſe all the poor, being ſlaves, were maintained by their own maſters. He ſays, no modern ſtate, except Holland, by the aid of its manufactures, has been able to employ or maintain its poor: that this new burthen has been brought on ſociety by churchmen, who either by miſtake or deſign have confounded things ſpiritual and temporal, and all good order, and good government, by recommending it to maſters to ſave their ſouls, by ſetting at liberty ſuch of their ſlaves as ſhould embrace the Chriſtian faith; in contradiction to our Saviour, who was far from uſing temporal advantages to enforce eternal truths; and to St. Paul, who, 1 Cor. vii. poſitively gives the preference to ſlavery. Hence we date hoſpitals, alms-houſes, and contributions; burdens, which we find ſo heavy on the community, and ſo inadequate to the purpoſe.

He ſtates the common objections urged againſt ſlavery; that men are equal by nature; that it is unjuſt to ſubmit the feelings and happineſs of the major part of a community, to the oppreſſion and barbarity of the few; and that the tyrant, who enſlaves his country, has the ſame plea for proſecuting his ambitious views, that a rich man can offer for bringing his fellows into bondage to him.

He anſwers theſe by diſtinguiſhing between political and domeſtic ſlavery, affirming that the latter has been diſgraced, by having been confounded with the other, which alone deſerves the name of ſlavery, as being ſubmitted, not to law, which may regulate domeſtic ſlavery, but to a jealous tyrant's caprice: that it is the intereſt of every maſter to uſe his ſlaves well, in order that he may reap the full advantage of their labour: that occaſional deviations from the ſuggeſtions of this prudence may be prevented by proper laws and regulations, and by the watchful care of a judge appointed for that purpoſe.

He ſhews the advantages which would accompany this eſtabliſhment, by ſtating what was the caſe in ancient times. The ancients had no poor caſt looſe on the public. They could, without poſſeſſing much other wealth, undertake, with their ſlaves, great public and private works: and this manner of employing their ſlaves and their wealth, preſerved among them a ſimplicity of manners, and living, not otherwiſe to be accounted for. Maſters knew nothing of the vexation of hired ſervants, who, after having been educated at a great expence for a man's ſervice, will leave him on the moſt trifling occaſion. Their ſlaves, in hopes of obtaining their liberty, had an emulation to pleaſe; and their being able to poſſeſs nothing,

took

took away that temptation to pilfer, ſo commonly the propenſity of hired ſervants, and, indeed, ſometimes rendered neceſſary for them to ſupport their families.

He propoſeth that vagabonds, and ſuch poor as cannot maintain themſelves, be proportioned out to men of a certain eſtate, to be employed in their grounds, that their children be brought up to ſuch uſeful manufactures as can be carried on at home; and that the public may not, in any caſe, loſe the benefit of their labour, they and their children ſhall be transferable for ever.*

He

* Vagabond beggars are a nuiſance which call loudly for redreſs, and which every well regulated ſociety will exert itſelf to get rid of. Let every vagabond be conſidered as the property of the public. Let a day be fixed, by proclamation, for apprehending them throughout the kingdom. Let their ſervice be ſold for ſeven years to ſuch as have employment for them. Let the money got for the ſtrong be given with the weak. If, at the expiration of their ſlavery, they ſhew a diſpoſition to ſettle, and can make a private bargain with any reponſible perſon, who will anſwer to the public for their behaviour, and will take them to work on the footing of free labourers, let them be diſcharged. This will excite them to be honeſt and faithful. Slavery, except for a crime that forfeits life, ſhould not be for life, that it may not perpetuate ſlavery in their children. Every vagabond child ſhould be brought up to ſome uſeful calling, and be free at thirty years of age. They all, when reſtored to freedom, ſhould be allowed a ſettlement.

A particular magiſtrate ſhould ſuperintend their treatment, hear, and decide on their and their maſters complaints. If at the termination of any period of ſlavery, they be found unworthy

He thinks the maſter ſhould not have power over the life of his ſervant, but ſhould anſwer for it with his own. He ſhould not torture or mutilate him: if convicted of ſuch ill treatment, he ſhould free his ſlave, and fix a penſion on him.

worthy of freedom, let them be ſold anew. If purchaſers do not offer, let them be divided by lot, and their children be apprentices. Coarſe, wholeſome food ſhould be allotted them, the kind and minimum being fixed by law.

If pariſhes were obliged to improve their commons, there would be full employment for them; and every thief, being firſt marked, ſhould be added to the number. When reſtored to freedom, they might have a cottage and garden given them, in full right, which they may prepare during the time of their ſervitude.

Such a ſtate would be far beyond the condition of a vagabond, a wretch, that regards neither divine nor human laws, but wallows in every impurity and low vice. Theſe regulations, properly purſued for one generation, would annihilate the evil; the very dread of being ſold, and working at the will of another, would recover the greateſt part of them to labour and ſociety. But this remedy ſhould be ſtrictly confined to thieves and vagabonds, and only while they continued ſuch.

At preſent our poor laws are calculated to encourage lazineſs, by ſupporting an idle man in as much plenty as him who labours and gets his bread honeſtly. When ſick, the poor ſhould be tenderly cared for; but when only idle they ſhould have a ſcanty coarſe fare, and clothes made up of patches, to make their ſituation irkſome to them. Thoſe that have large families ſhould have every reaſonable indulgence, and the burden of their children ſhould be made eaſy to them. All ſingle ſtrollers ſhould be ſtrictly dealt with. Wherever the indolence of thoſe that are ſupported by charity is ſuſpected, their pittance ſhould not be given in money, but in food, from day to day; and there ſhould, as in hoſpitals, be rates of full, half, and third allowance.

him. The ſervant's family ſhould be provided for in clothes, diet, and lodging. His children ſhould be inſtructed in the principles of morality and religion, be taught to read, and be furniſhed with proper books. They ſhall not work on Sundays; but have liberty to go to church. In every circumſtance, but that of not poſſeſſing property, and their labour being directed at the will of another, they ſhall not be under the rule of their maſters, but the protection of the law. When grown, by age, uſeleſs to their maſters, they ſhall be received into public hoſpitals. If their maſter, on any account, make them free, he ſhall either accommodate them with a penſion, or put them in a way of living, that will keep them from becoming burdenſome to the public. To check the abuſe of power in the maſter, a magiſtrate ſhould be appointed to ſee that juſtice be done them.

Now, however inadmiſſible ſuch a ſtate of ſervitude may be, in a country where liberty is the eſtabliſhed birth-right of the loweſt member of the community, yet, would heaven, that the ſlavery in our ſugar colonies were only what is here propoſed. We muſt then drop many of our objections againſt it. Still the arguments againſt this degree of it are unanſwerable.

He ſuppoſeth that a ſenſe of intereſt will prevent the abuſe of power in the maſter. There cannot

cannot be a fairer deduction in theory, (which was all that he could have to go upon) nor is there one more falſe in fact. Even ſhould we aſcribe the treatment which Africans meet with from their maſters, not wholly to an abuſe of power, but, in ſome meaſure, alſo to a perſuaſion, whether it be true or falſe, that becauſe of their inferiority we are not obliged to treat them well; how comes it that ſober, indented, white ſervants, are treated with equal, perhaps ſuperior cruelty by their North American maſters; in conſequence of which, not more than one in five ſurvives even a temporary ſlavery of five years, in a condition to ſettle a habitation and family for himſelf? Revenge for contradiction or faults in an inferior, whether real or imagined, will not allow the cooler affections of the mind to operate, but drives at once, like an eagle on its helpleſs prey, heedleſs how far the avenger himſelf may be involved in the miſchief.

Nor, though his magiſtrate be an exceeding proper and neceſſary check, would he, or could he, if ever ſo impartial and watchful, be able to enſure good uſage to ſervants, from the ignorant, the parſimonious, the luxurious, the extravagant, the capricious, the paſſionate, the ſpiteful maſter. In a thouſand ways may they be, and they daily are, tormented, which no law can provide againſt, no care can poſſibly remedy.

His

His diſtinction between political and domeſtic ſlavery, except wherein they reſpect different objects, is imaginary and inconcluſive, when applied to individuals; or whatever difference there is, will be found to conclude againſt the latter. The great tyrant has not the opportunity of exerciſing his luſt of oppreſſion over individuals, except they ſtand oppoſed to his power; and a quiet man may, in an extenſive country, paſs his time tolerably eaſy and ſecure under the moſt arbitrary government. But the domeſtic tyrant can teaſe and torment every wretch ſubmitted to his power, every moment of their lives. They cannot eat or ſleep, but when and how he pleaſeth. Every feeling, every indulgence, is held at his pleaſure; and too often he feels a ſpiteful amuſement, an infernal delight, in unneceſſarily imbittering their miſerable cup, even at the expence of his own eaſe and intereſt.

That the heavenly Preacher of peace and good will towards men, ſhould be ſuppoſed to have encouraged an unnatural ſtate of ſociety, which, in its very inſtitution, muſt counteract in the ſuperior every benevolent inclination from man to man; and muſt go far to ſuppreſs in the inferior every deſire after that intellectual improvement, and heavenly happineſs, to point out the way to which was the very deſign of his humiliation; is ſuch blaſphemy againſt the divine goodneſs

goodneſs and condeſcenſion of his miſſion, and is ſo flatly contradicted by the whole tenor of his doctrine, as to be utterly unworthy of any anſwer. St. Paul again is preſſed into the ſervice of ſlavery, againſt the plain grammatical ſenſe of the expreſſion in the original, and the whole ſcope of his argument: of ſo much more weight than truth is the driving of a favourite point. After generally remarking, that, notwithſtanding any ſuppoſed particular inconveniences, political happineſs, by the extenſion of freedom, has been extended far beyond what the warmeſt imagination could conceive; we may allow churchmen in the company of their Maſter and his apoſtle, to reſt ſatisfied with the blame of having been the means of aboliſhing ſlavery; and may hope that this writer's authority, in this caſe, may ſtand them in ſome ſtead againſt that more general reproach caſt on them of their being the worſhippers of power in whatever hands it is found.

By depriving a ſervant of property, as he propoſes, we know, that, in fact, you make him careleſs and deſperate. The beſt way of ſecuring his fidelity and honeſty, is to contrive that he may have property to care for and fear the loſs of. If a ſlave has deſerted the plantation, the moſt effectual way to bring him back is to give out, that you mean, if he does not return, by ſuch a day, to pull his houſe down.

He

He remarks that the Highlanders of his days were ſavage thieves and beggars, becauſe ſubject to their chieftans; and would not his eſtabliſhment of the like ſubjection in the civilized low-lands, in time produce the like effects? A Chriſtian would reſolve the ſilence concerning the poor in the heathen world, to their not being deemed an object either of hiſtory or philoſophy; or to that common tie between man and man, which revelation inculcates, not being then acknowledged, to make the relief of their diſtreſs a matter of duty or merit.

But if no poor were then ſupported by private benevolence, was no miſery therefore felt? What were the early ſeditions at Rome, but ſtruggles between wealth and poverty, till war and diſtant conqueſt had enriched or drawn off the oppreſſed ſtarving multitude? Indeed, where was there room left for public beggars, when the poor were ſlaves, and had only their maſters to whom to cry for help? Yet the elder Cato turned out ſome beggars on the public, in a manner not greatly to his credit. Among the Jews, the rigours of ſlavery were ſoftened by religion; and there the poor, from the firſt, were an object of law. Their law-givers informed them, that in their moſt flouriſhing ſtate, there ſhould be always poor among them, whom they were to conſider as the Lord's penſioners, who were in his name to receive, from

from their wealthy neighbours, that tribute of grateful thanks which his goodneſs claimed from them. And, doubtleſs, had this duty been propoſed, from the like motives, in other ſtates, proper objects of it would not have been found wanting.

A better reaſon to be given for the ſimplicity of the ancient manner of living may be found in the little communication which there was between different countries for the purpoſe of exchanging modes and ſuperfluities. Thoſe who live now on the produce of their own grounds, live as uniformly, and ſimply as the ancients did. But was the Roman mode ſimple after the conqueſt of Aſia? He mentions the public works of the ancients. Do we know thoſe of any ſtate that in grandeur or utility may be compared to the floating fortreſſes of Britain, which carry the arms and power of the ſtate around the world?

Why the public ſhould build hoſpitals to receive ſlaves, worn down in the ſervice of private perſons, he gives not a reaſon; nor is any obvious. If the ancients were not troubled with the reſtleſs ingratitude and pilfering habits of hired ſervants, did they feel no inconveniency from the ſullen intractable diſpoſition of ſlaves, whom they could not get rid of? Or, if the deſire of freedom excited the emulation of a ſlave,

ſlave, would it not make him alſo feel the immediate hardſhips of ſlavery? would he not, with deſpair, look around him, and view many ſlaves transferred from one maſter to another; often from good to bad, without acquiring that liberty which they had endeavoured to deſerve by their fidelity? and would he not anticipate the like fate, and loſe all deſire of exertion? Is not this indeed the general caſe, at this day, in the ſugar colonies?

Fletcher ſuppoſes that neceſſity will drive his country into the meaſure of ſlavery. It is near a century ſince he hazarded this opinion; and inſtead thereof, by the aboliſhing of juriſdictions, more liberty, and greater privileges have been communicated to it: and the conſequence has been a more general extenſion of political happineſs, and private conveniency. Had his plan taken place, would ſo many towns have ariſen, or been enlarged in various parts of the country? Should we have heard of the manufactures at Paiſly? Could Glaſgow have been able to have endured a loſs (even ſuppoſing it only temporary) of perhaps a million of money, by American independency, almoſt without once complaining? Would a few overgrown landlords have allowed the Britiſh army and navy to have been filled up and recruited out of their gangs of ſlaves, by the many ten thouſands of Scotchmen, that in every war, ſince his time, have bled

bled ſometimes for the rights of the empire, ſometimes to quiet the popular alarms, about that bugbear, the balance of power? Would oppreſſed, half ſtarved ſlaves have made ſuch hardy ſoldiers; or, like them, endured, without complaint, every various oppoſite climate, in carrying on the public ſervice?

It is true Scotland ſtill labours under diſadvantages. The tenant is not ſufficiently ſecured againſt the extortion of the landlord. But what would be gained by reducing a great porportion of theſe tenants and their poſterity into the condition of ſlaves? Would they be allowed to live plentifully, when their lords wanted to parade it at court? Or are luxury and extravagance to be ſatisfied, while any thing within their reach remains to be devoured? If ſlavery had been eſtabliſhed on his plan, would not power and intrigue have been uſed, to draw within its circle as many as poſſible, till maſter and ſlave had abſorbed every other rank? No, let lazineſs and vice be effectually reſtrained, even by reſtraining that liberty and privileges which they juſtly forfeit. But ſet not one man paramount over another. Let their country and its laws remain maſters of their fate.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Maſter and Slave in the French Colonies.

IN the French colonies, the public pays an immediate attention to the treatment and inſtruction of ſlaves. The intendants are charged with their protection, proper miſſionaries are appointed for the purpoſe of training them up to a certain degree of religious knowledge; and ample eſtates or funds are allotted for the maintenance of thoſe eccleſiaſtics. The negroes, as ſoon as introduced into the colony, are put under the care of theſe laſt. The maſter is obliged to acquaint the governor or intendant, within eight days, of every African ſlave whom he has purchaſed, that a miſſionary may be aſſigned to inſtruct him. All the faſts and feſtivals of the Romiſh church, which it is well known are very numerous, are commanded to be ſtrictly obſerved, during which the ſlave is forbidden to labour, that he may have leiſure to attend maſs.

Every ſlave has a claim to a certain allowance of food and clothing, which is not to be diminiſhed by their maſters, under pretence of having given him time to work for himſelf. The power of the maſter is reſtrained to the whip and chain; he may not wound or mutilate his ſlave. On ill treatment received from his maſter,

maſter, or on being deprived of his allowance of food and raiment, the ſlave is directed to apply to the King's attorney, who is obliged to proſecute the maſter forthwith. This officer is alſo bound to proſecute, if by any other means he hears of the abuſe. This reaſon is added in the law, "This we will to be obſerved, to "check the abuſe of power in the maſter." If a ſlave rendered unſerviceable, through age, hurts, or diſeaſe, be turned adrift by his maſter, he is to be placed in the public hoſpital, and to be maintained there at the expence of his maſter. Theſe are ſome of the regulations eſtabliſhed by the Code Noir, to check the exorbitancy of maſters; an inſtance of attention and benevolence in the French government, that may well put Britiſh negligence to ſhame!

The reſpect in which marriage is held, brings a farther advantage to French ſlaves. The ceremony is ſolemnized by the prieſt, and the tie continues for life. This gives them an attachment to their little families, and a concern for their intereſt, and of conſequence a care over them, and their own behaviour, that is ſeldom ſeen among Engliſh ſlaves; where the connexion between the ſexes is arbitrary, and too frequently caſual; where a male ſlave reckons it a piece of ſtate to multiply his wives, and change them at pleaſure, without looking beyond the preſent gratification, or conſidering how his conduct

conduct may affect the fate of his offspring. Care is alſo taken in the French iſlands to marry them young, in the ſame plantation; and if they perceive a particular attachment between two young people, belonging to different maſters, it is common to reſign or exchange them, that they may both have the ſame owner, and that marriage may have its full effect on their conduct.*

The French ſlaves reap a conſiderable advantage from the preſence of their owners. One cauſe of this is, that, in the colonies, they enjoy more liberty, and pay fewer taxes than in France.† An Engliſh planter, if out of debt, or

* A gentleman of Guadaloupe, Monſieur Seguer, informed me, that, with ſome pains, he had brought it about to have all his ſlaves married within his own plantations; and that by making them all people of property, in allowing to each his bit of land, with a hog, a goat, and ſome poultry, and by ſome extraordinary pains uſed to inſtruct them, he had brought them to a degree of healthineſs, good ſenſe, tractability, and happineſs uncommon among his neighbours. And I ſhall here remark, generally, that nothing has a happier effect in reforming or improving a ſlave, than the giving him ſomething of his own to care for, and fear the loſs of.

† The French governors have liberal appointments from the crown to ſet them above the neceſſity, and to take away the temptation of oppreſſing their people by exacting extraordinary fees from them in the manner of our Weſt Indian governors, who, to the diſgrace of the government that appointed them, are forced to collect their maintenance in perquiſites from thoſe who have buſineſs with them. The Britiſh colonies are

or a caſual crop be plentiful, muſt run away to England, which he calls his home, where generally loſt to every uſeful purpoſe in life, he vies with the nobility in entertainments, extravagance, and expence, while his attorney, and manager, are obliged to over-work, and pinch, his poor ſlaves, to keep up, or increaſe the uſual remittances. It would make indignation herſelf almoſt ſmile to hear their piteous complaining letters to their agents read, when the neceſſities of the plantation have occaſioned a ſmall draught to

are alſo made the property of patent officers, the profit of whoſe places conſiſts wholly in perquiſites, and is in general farmed from the principals in England by two or three ſubſtitutes in ſucceſſion, till the immediate poſſeſſor be obliged, in his own defence, to commit acts of oppreſſion, to make up his rent. And ſuch is the corrupt influence at our court of theſe ſinecure patentees, as to have procured a ſtanding inſtruction to governors to oppoſe and render null every attempt made by provincial aſſemblies to regulate their fees of office, or check their extortion. Thus the government of the mother country is deprived of the aſſiſtance of men of character and ſubſtance in public offices, to ſupport its influence in the colonies; while theſe have impoſed on them a moſt humiliating and burdenſome badge of ſlavery, and have all their intereſts, and all improvements of their police ſacrificed to the ſelfiſh views of men whom they never ſaw. It has alſo been uſual of late years to permit the cuſtom-houſe officers to hold their places by deputies, doubtleſs, to the great improvement of the revenue. The intercourſe between our Weſt Indian colonies is by ſmall veſſels carrying £40 or £50 freight. The cuſtom-houſes force full one half of this ſum out of them, under the name of (not taxes but) fees. The conſequence is, that when proviſions or ſtores are unloaded in one iſland, they cannot, but in extreme neceſſity, be reſhipped for another iſland.

to be made on them. And often the manager, whom the caprice, or ſelfiſh, or family views of an attorney can, without warning, diſplace, looks not forward to the conſequences of ill treatment of ſlaves, while trying to recommend himſelf by a forced exertion of their ſtrength, in hopes that its pernicious effects may poſſibly not appear in his time.* If the Engliſh owner lives on his plantation, he is too often ſo involved in debt, the effects of his predeceſſor's, or his own former extravagance, or of injudicious purchaſes, that he can ſpare little from the preſſing demands of his creditors, to allot for the eaſe, and well-being of ſlaves, or indeed for any neceſſary improvement of his property. The French, as they generally live each on his own plantation, ſo they are happy in not having the credit, or opportunity which the Engliſh have of running in debt.† All their improvements

* Hence a planter always knows the ſtate of his affairs beſt, at the change of managers; it generally requiring many hundreds, ſometimes thouſands of pounds, to ſet matters agoing under the new director; an expence that might be ſaved by uſing a leſs parcimonious method in the ordinary management of the plantation.

† The whole debt owing by the Martinico planters about the year 1773 was eſtimated nearly at 200,000l. ſterling. St. Chriſtopher's, which, in proportion to its extent, is our richeſt colony, and may be in value about one-third of the importance of Martinico, though divided among fewer than 120 proprietors, could not owe leſs at that time than 720,000l. ſterling.

ments muſt ariſe out of their induſtry. They are therefore more gradual, and better founded, than in our colonies, where it has been only neceſſary to deliver in to a merchant an exaggerated, pompous account of the richneſs of the plantation on which the money is to be raiſed, to procure liberty for drawing on him for thouſands after thouſands. Formerly induſtry, in a courſe of years, raiſed immenſe fortunes in the Weſt Indies; few have been raiſed ſince loans became frequent in England. Borrowed money, ſeldom, one may ſay hardly ever, has ſucceeded, when in any conſiderable proportion to the property mortgaged for it. Let others explain the cauſe, I content myſelf with recording the fact. Thus French planters, not having intereſt money to provide, nor the ambition of retiring to Europe, to ſtimulate them in accumulating money, are not under the neceſſity of forcing their ſlaves beyond their ſtrength, in carrying on their plantations to that exquiſite degree of culture, that is common in our colonies, and which is effected, not ſo much by contrivance and method, or by increaſing with proper care and nouriſhment the animal powers of their ſlaves, as by obliging them to extraordinary efforts, that ſoon wear them out; and which, inſtead of allowing them to increaſe in the courſe of nature, make conſtant demands on the ſlave market, to enable them to ſupport the character

of

of the plantation. Far from planting, as we do, every rood of land that they poſſeſs, in ſugar cane, and depending on foreign ſupplies for food, the French try to live as much as poſſible within themſelves. A conſiderable proportion of land is ſet apart for proviſions. A late edict has reſtricted the minimum to one acre in ten. Farther, the French plantation ſlaves are attached to the ſoil, and cannot be drawn off to pay debts, or be ſold ſeparate from it. This gives them a laſting property in their huts, and little ſpots of ground. They may ſafely cultivate them, and not, as in the Britiſh colonies, fear their being turned out of poſſeſſion, or transferred from one proprietor to another, without regard had to their intereſt or feelings. From theſe circumſtances, and from their manners being more communicative, the French, in the colonies, live more in a family way among their ſlaves, than our planters; they become more ſenſible of their wants and abilities; they naturally contract a regard and an affection for them; the ſlaves are not hurried in their work, and enjoy a greater plenty, and variety of wholeſome food, than when their allowance of muſty flour, or weavily maize from America, is dealt out to them from a ſcanty, bruiſed tin or pewter meaſure, by an unfeeling overſeer; who perhaps recommends himſelf to his abſent employer

ployer by the number of ſhares into which he has divided the wretched pittance. *

Now the obſervation is, that the French ſlaves are more decently dreſſed, are more orderly, ſenſible, and ten times more honeſt than Engliſh ſlaves. They uſe private prayer. The field negroes begin and leave off work with prayer; the black overſeer officiating as prieſt. This cuſtom of having field prayers has been found ſo encouraging and uſeful, that many of the Engliſh planters in Grenada, on their becoming owners of French ſlaves, kept it up on their plantations; yet ſome of theſe would have mocked and ſneered at the practice, if propoſed in their own iſlands. In the French colonies even in their towns, there is hardly

* Though the French government has cared thus humanely for ſlaves, though the manners and circumſtances of the French planters peculiarly favour their good treatment; yet ſince the temper of the maſter muſt ſtill have great influence on the condition of the ſlave, this will not prevent, nor can we wonder, when we find, among the French, particular acts oppreſſive, and particular owners cruel. But in a vigorous government, ſuch as is that of France, theſe acts cannot be frequent, nor theſe men numerous. On the other hand, we muſt acknowledge, that the free principles of our conſtitution counteract many of the ill effects of our ſcandalous neglect of the police of our colonies; and that the tyrannical nature of the French government prevents the French from reaping the full effects of this their benevolent attention to the claims of humanity. Had we governors and other officers as diſintereſted as the French, and acting under the like benevolent inſtructions, the difference would be highly in our favour; and had the French governors the ſame principles to guide them as we have, the French coloniſts would enjoy a great acceſſion of political happineſs.

occaſion

occaſion for a lock to ſecure goods, or ſtore-houſes. In our colonies, no door, or lock, is a ſufficient ſecurity for any thing which a ſlave can carry away. In Grenada, they have long bitterly complained, that ſince Engliſh ſlaves came among them, they can keep nothing ſafe from being purloined, and that even the honeſty of their own old ſlaves has been greatly debauched.

SECT. VI.

Maſter and Slave in the Britiſh Colonies.

TO purſue the preceding obſervations, which candour obliged us to make in favour of our rivals, we muſt acknowledge, that an Engliſh ſlave has nothing to check him in ill doing, but the fears of the whip, and that is a weak reſtraint on a ſtarving, craving appetite. The French ſlave is placed above the ſolicitations of hunger; and reſpecting his behaviour, has, to the dread of pain, ſuperadded, as a guide, the hopes and fears of religion, and the approbation and diſpleaſure of his prieſt. The French, in the treatment of their ſlaves, regard the ſuggeſtions of humanity, and enforce its dictates by their laws. The Engliſh have not paid the leaſt attention to enforce by a law either humanity or juſtice, as theſe may reſpect their ſlaves. Many are the reſtrictions, and ſevere

are

are the puniſhments, to which our ſlaves are ſubjected. But if you except a law, that Governor Leake got enacted in Nevis, to diſtinguiſh petty larceny in ſlaves from felony; and a law in Grenada and Jamaica, that obligeth maſters to allot to their ſlaves a certain portion of land for the growth of proviſions; and one in this laſt iſland, that grants them Saturday afternoon for the culture of it; I recollect not a ſingle clauſe in all our colony acts, (and I peruſed the ſeveral codes with the view of remarking ſuch) enacted to ſecure to them the leaſt humane treatment, or to ſave them from the capricious cruelty of an ignorant, unprincipled maſter, or a moroſe, unfeeling overſeer. Nay a horſe, a cow, or a ſheep, is much better protected with us by the law, than a poor ſlave. For theſe, if found in a treſpaſs, are not to be injured, but ſecured for their owners; while a half ſtarved negroe, may, for breaking a ſingle cane, which probably he himſelf has planted, be hacked to pieces with a cutlas; even though, perhaps, he be incapable of reſiſtance, or of running away from the watchman, who finds him in the fact. Nay, we have men among us, who dare boaſt of their giving orders to their watchmen, not to bring home any ſlave that they find breaking of canes, but, as they call it, to *hide* them, that is to *kill*, and bury them. And, accordingly,

ingly, every now-and-then, ſome poor wretch is miſſed, and ſome lacerated carcaſe is diſcovered.

Our countrymen are left, each to be guided by his own changeable temper, and to be influenced by a ſemblance of ſelf-intereſt; nor have they any tie on them, in their behaviour to the wretches under them, but this intereſt, often ill underſtood; in ſome perhaps there may be a deſire after a reputation for humanity, too frequently little guided by ſentiment; in a few benevolence directed by conſcience. Slaves are eſteemed among us the intire property of their maſters, and as having, diſtinct from him, no right or intereſt of their own. And our conſtitution has ſuch an exceſſive bias to perſonal liberty, that in contradiction to the maxims of every well ordered ſtate, it cannot, or will not, meddle with private behaviour. Hence that want of energy, vigour, and even propriety in every department of our police. Many actions paſs daily unnoticed among us, that would have degraded the higheſt ſenator of Rome into one of the loweſt tribes. Society profeſſes to direct the actions of individuals to the greateſt public good; a purpoſe to which all private intereſt and gratification ſhould conſtantly be made to give place. Hence the true ſecret of police, after having ſecured the lives, liberties,

liberties, and properties of the citizens, is to turn the conduct and induſtry of individuals to public profit, conſidering the ſtate as one whole, and leaving private perſons, each to find his own particular happineſs in public proſperity, checking every appearance of a wayward diſpoſition, that may make the man injurious to his neighbour, or unprofitable to his country. What a field do the Britiſh territories offer for ſuch a plan of police?

Indeed, with this view before us, our boaſted conſtitution preſents only an uncultivated wild. How much remains undone in the various departments of commerce, of rural economy, roads, rivers, commons, government of towns, perfection of ſtaple commodities, excluſive privileges, and the like? In the caſe of which we treat, the conſtitution lays no claim to the ſlave, but confines its attention to the intercourſe of freemen, leaving citizens at liberty, as maſters, to diſpoſe of, and treat their ſlaves, with the ſame indifference, if they pleaſe, with the ſame unfeeling wantonneſs, which without controul they may exerciſe on their cattle.

While we reflect on the ſtate of ſlavery in our colonies, among the freeſt people in the world, and extend our views to the like inſtances

ſtances in hiſtory, it becomes a mournful, an humiliating conſideration in human nature, to find that thoſe men and nations, whom liberty hath exalted, and who, therefore, ought to regard it tenderly in others, are conſtantly for reſtraining its bleſſings within their own little circle, and delight more in augmenting the train of their dependents, than in adding to the rank of fellow citizens, or in diffuſing the benefits of freedom among their neighbours. Every where, in every age, the chain of ſlavery has been faſhioned, and applied by the hand of liberty. Every ancient, every modern ſtate gives ſhameful evidence of the truth, from the mock manumiſſion of the Greeks, by the Roman Flaminius, to the oppreſſed ſtate of the Dutch barrier, and their Eaſt Indian ſettlements, begun while they themſelves were ſtruggling for freedom. *

* The Athenians never admitted ſtrangers to the privilege of citizenſhip; Hercules, and one or two more, being the only foreigners indulged with it. This accounts for the ſhort period of their once ſplendid maritime empire. It is true the Romans ſucceſſively admitted their neighbours, according to their vicinity, to the privilege of citizens; but they acted from no generous principle. They increaſed the number of tyrants, in proportion as their conqueſts added new ſlaves to be kept in ſubjection by them. Of this the ſocial war is an undoubted proof. Yet this conduct, though ſpringing from unworthy motives, was followed with the beſt effects, and gave ſtability to a ſtate, that conqueſt otherwiſe might have ruined.

It will perhaps be alleged, that this inconſiderate treatment of ſlaves in our colonies may, as is generally ſuppoſed in Britain, be the effect of the illiberal turn of the coloniſts, accuſtomed from their infancy to trifle with the feelings, and ſmile at the miſeries, of wretches born to be the drudges of their avarice, and ſlaves of their caprice. But it is to be remarked, that adventurers from Europe are univerſally more cruel and moroſe towards ſlaves, than Creoles, or native Weſt-Indians. Indeed, whatever I ſhall have to ſay of the conduct of individuals towards ſlaves, and the inattention of maſters towards their claims, may be applied with more juſtice to the new ſettlers, than to the natives. Often attachment will ſecure from theſe laſt good uſage, while the ſlave has no hold on the others; nay, probably is degraded by over-weening European pride, into a ſtate differing but in name from brutal, by a treatment leſs generous, leſs conſiderate, than a horſe or an ox receives from them. Oppreſſion makes the wretches ſtupid, and their ſtupidity becomes their crime, and provokes their farther puniſhment. In particular, in the colony from which the following obſervations are chiefly drawn, ſo great is the proportion of Europeans in all its active ſtations, that the character of the community muſt be taken from them, not from the natives.

And

And when one conſiders how theſe adventurers are uſually collected, how often the refuſe of each man's connections, of every trade, and every profeſſion, are thronged in upon them, much ſentiment, morality, or religion, cannot well be expected to be found within the circle of their influence. This muſt ſerve as an apology for any thing ſeemingly ſevere, that may appear in the proſecution of the ſubject; to which we now return. *

The diſcipline of a ſugar plantation is as exact as that of a regiment: at four o'clock in the morning the plantation bell rings to call the ſlaves into the field. Their work is to manure, dig, and hoe, plow the ground, to plant, weed, and cut the cane, to bring it to the mill, to have the juice expreſſed and boiled into ſugar. About nine o'clock, they have half an hour for breakfaſt, which they take in the field. Again they fall to work, and, according to the cuſtom of the plantation, continue until eleven o'clock, or noon; the bell then rings, and

* We muſt not confound every European ſettler in the above cenſure; ſentiment, and benevolence, refined by education, influence ſeveral ſuch within the author's acquaintance. Indeed, whatever there is generally amiſs in the conduct of maſters to their ſlaves, ariſes not ſo much from any particular depravity in them as men, as from the arbitrary unnatural relation that exiſts between them and their wretched dependents; the effects of which, neither ſentiment nor morality can at all times prevent.

and the ſlaves are diſperſed in the neighbourhood, to pick up about the fences, in the mountains, and fallow or waſte grounds, natural graſs and weeds for the horſes and cattle. The time allotted for this branch of work, and preparation for dinner, varies from an hour and an half, to near three hours. In collecting pile by pile their little bundles of graſs, the ſlaves of low land plantations, frequently burnt up by the ſun, muſt wander in their neighbours grounds, perhaps more than two miles from home. In their return, often ſome lazy fellow, of the intermediate plantation, with the view of ſaving himſelf the trouble of picking his own graſs, ſeizes on them, and pretends to inſiſt on carrying them to his maſter, for picking graſs, or being found in his grounds; a crime that forfeits the bundle, and ſubjects the offender to twenty laſhes of a long cart whip, of twiſted leather thongs. The wretch, rather than be carried to judgment in another man's plantation, is fain to eſcape with the loſs of his bundle, and often to put up quietly with a good drubbing from the robber into the bargain. The hour of delivering in his graſs, and renewing his taſk, approaches, while hunger importunately ſolicits him to remember its call; but he muſt renew the irkſome toil, and ſearch out ſome green, ſhady, unfrequented ſpot, from which to repair his loſs.

At

At one, or in ſome plantations, at two o'clock, the bell ſummons them to deliver in the tale of their graſs, and aſſemble to their field work. If the overſeer thinks their bundles too ſmall, or if they come too late with them, they are puniſhed with a number of ſtripes from four to ten. Some maſters, under a fit of carefulneſs for their cattle, have gone as far as fifty ſtripes, which effectually diſable the culprit for weeks. If a ſlave has no graſs to deliver in, he keeps away out of fear, ſkulks about in the mountains, and is abſent from his work often for months; an aggravation of his crime, which, when he is caught, he is made to remember.

About half an hour before ſun ſet, they may be found ſcattered again over the land, like the Iſraelites in Egypt, to cull, blade by blade, from among the weeds, their ſcanty parcels of graſs. About ſeven o'clock in the evening, or later, according to the ſeaſon of the year, when the overſeer can find leiſure, they are called over by liſt, to deliver in their ſecond bundles of graſs; and the ſame puniſhment, as at noon, is inflicted on the delinquents. They then ſeparate, to pick up, in their way to their huts, (if they have not done it, as they generally do, while gathering graſs) a little bruſh wood, or dry cow-dung, to prepare ſome ſimple meſs for ſupper, and to-morrow's breakfaſt. This employs

ploys them till near midnight, and then they go to ſleep, till the bell calls them in the morning.

This picking of graſs, as it is fitly called, often in a ſevere drought, when it is to be found only in the receſſes of the mountain, thus thruſt in by the by into the hour of wearineſs and reſt, is the greateſt hardſhip that a ſlave endures, and the moſt frequent cauſe of his running away, or abſenting himſelf from his work; which not only ſubjects him to frequent puniſhment, but actually renders him unprofitable, worthleſs, and deſerving of puniſhment. He can neither refreſh, or indulge his wearied body. He is ſubjected by it to injury. He is placed in the jaws of treſpaſs, and unavoidably made obnoxious to oppreſſion, and ſtripes. And yet a few acres of land, in proportion to the extent of the plantation, allotted for artificial graſs, and a few weakly ſlaves ſeparated from the work, would take away the neceſſity of providing for cattle in this haraſſing ſcanty manner.

This graſs, except ſuch part of it as is reſerved for the ſtable horſes, procured by ſo much toil, and forced out of the ſlave by ſuch repeated puniſhment, under pretence of feeding the cattle and mules, is ſpread abroad under their feet, on a fermenting incloſed dung heap, called a pen. There a very conſiderable part is loſt to every purpoſe of nouriſhment, by being trampled

trampled under the beaſts feet; where mixing with dung and urine, it ferments, corrupts, and with its ſuffocating ſteams in that ſultry climate, inſtead of ſupplying them with vigour, fills them with diſeaſe; as if Providence meant to revenge the oppreſſion of the ſlave, in being forced to drudge thus for it, by inſpiring the maſter with a ſpirit of abſurdity, in his manner of uſing it. *

The work here mentioned, is conſidered as the field duty of ſlaves, that may be inſiſted on without reproach to the manager, of unuſual ſeverity,

* This pen is an incloſure, perhaps of ſixty by eighty feet, in which, from thirty to fifty cattle and mules are kept and fed. The decayed leaves, and offals of the ſugar cane, are from time to time thrown in for litter. Their provender is ſpread over it, and being mixed with urine, dung, and rain, becomes a fermenting maſs, which is emptied once, and in ſome plantations, twice a year. The diſeaſe generally fatal to mules, ſeems to be of the nature of a putrid infectious fever, which, if it does not ariſe from, is at leaſt heightened by, this abſurd manner of feeding. The cattle being often ſtaked out in the fallow grounds, are not ſo conſtantly expoſed to theſe noxious ſteams.

Though a planter will readily pay 30l. ſterling for a good mule, or a bull, and though chiefly from this ſcanty abſurd method of feeding them, he be obliged to renew his expence from year to year; yet will he not allow a few acres for artificial graſs, nor even a ſtall, a manger, or a clean ſpot, to ſave their ſmall pittance of provender from filth, or to feed them apart from the foul exhalations of a dung heap, in its moſt unwholeſome ſtate. There have been inſtances of pens burſting out into a ſmouldering flame, while the cattle were feeding on them.

ſeverity, and which the white and black overſeers ſtand over them to ſee executed; the tranſgreſſion againſt which, is quickly followed with the ſmart of the cart whip. This inſtrument, in the hands of a ſkilful driver, cuts out flakes of ſkin and fleſh with every ſtroke; and the wretch, in this mangled condition, is turned out to work in dry or wet weather, which laſt, now and then, brings on the cramp, and ends his ſufferings and ſlavery together.

In crop-time, which may be when reckoned altogether on a plantation, from five to ſix months; the cane tops, by ſupplying the cattle with food, gives the ſlaves ſome little relaxation in picking graſs. But ſome pretendedly induſtrious planters, men of much buſtle, and no method, will, eſpecially in moon-light, keep their people till ten o'clock at night, carrying wowra, the decayed leaves of the cane, to boil off the cane juice. A conſiderable number of ſlaves is kept to attend in turn the mill and boiling houſe all night. They ſleep over their work; the ſugar is ill tempered, burnt in the boiler, and improperly ſtruck; while the mill every now-and-then grinds off an hand, or an arm, of thoſe drowſy worn down creatures that feed it. Still the proceſs of making ſugar is carried on in many plantations, for months, without any other interruption, than during ſome part of day light on Sundays. In ſome plantations

plantations it is the cuſtom, during crop-time, to keep the whole gang employed as above, from morning to night, and alternately one half throughout the night, to ſupply the mill with canes, and the boiling houſe with wowra.

This labour is more or leſs moderated, in proportion to the method and good ſenſe of the manager. In ſome plantations the young children and worn-out ſlaves are ſet apart to pick graſs, and bring cane tops from the field for the cattle, and do no other work. Sometimes the field gangs bring both their bundles of graſs at once, being allowed for that purpoſe a little extra time, during the meridian heat; which ſaves them an unneceſſary repetition of wandering in the evening three or four miles to ſearch for it, and enables the manager to employ the cool part of the afternoon in the common labour of the plantation. Sometimes they are diſmiſſed for graſs before the uſual hour; or if they be hoe-ploughing land, frequently none is required from them. In ſome plantations, they are not puniſhed for coming late into the field, if they appear there about ſun-riſe. In moſt well-ordered plantations, they leave off grinding and boiling before midnight, and begin not again till about dawn: it having been found, that the quantity of ſugar made in the night, is not in proportion to the time; that it not only ſuffers in quality, but alſo lies open to pilferage; and

that

that the mules, particularly the moſt tractable, and eaſily harneſſed, are injured by being worked indiſcriminately, in the dark, out of their turn; another valuable conſequence, this of their being confuſedly huddled together in that incloſed dung-heap, the pen: for the danger of grinding off a drowſy negroe's arm, or haraſſing him to death, is a conſideration which, without theſe other circumſtances, would hardly interrupt the grand work of ſugar-making.

Every plantation contains little ſkirts, and portions of broken land, unfit for the cultivation of ſugar. Theſe are uſually divided among the ſlaves for the growth of proviſions; but where the maſter is inattentive, a few of the principal negroes often ſeize on, and appropriate to themſelves, the poſſeſſions of the reſt, and make the ſimpler ſort labour for them; and many are ſo lazy, that nothing but the whip, and the preſence of the overſeer, can make them work, even for themſelves. There is ſuch a ready market for all the little articles which theſe ſpots produce, that the induſtrious ſlaves of a few, though but a few, plantations ſituated near the mountains, where the weather is ſeaſonable and favours the growth of vegetables, maintain themſelves in clothes and food, tolerably well, by the ſale of their various fruits, with little other immediate aid from their maſter, beſides a weekly allowance of herrings. But, in far the greater

greater number of plantations, the quantity of proviſions, or marketable vegetables, is uncertain and trifling; and neceſſity and hunger will not permit the wretches, to leave them in the ground to ripen ſufficiently. Hence many diſeaſes and ruined conſtitutions, from this ſcanty, rude, ill-prepared food, uſed among them.

Formerly, before we became ſuch accurate planters, and before luxury had rapaciouſly converted every little nook of land into ſugar, the ſlaves had a field or two of the fallow cane-land yearly divided among them, for a crop of yams, peaſe, and potatoes; and a field of the beſt cane-land was annually put in yams, to be reſerved for their weekly allowance. When our late North American brethren were pleaſed to threaten our ſugar iſlands with famine, this cuſtom began again to be renewed, and with ſuch ſucceſs as might have encouraged them, never, in time to come, to have made themſelves as dependent on North America as formerly for their daily bread.

Some maſters, now-and-then, give their ſlaves Saturday afternoon, out of crop-time, to till their ſpots of ground; ſometimes will turn in the whole gang among them to weed and put them in order, under the direction of the overſeer. But, in general, *the culture of their private patches, and the picking of graſs for their*

their cattle, are their employments on Sunday. In the low lands theſe proviſion ſpots are hardly uſeful ſix months in twelve, from the uſual drineſs of the weather. Added to the produce of their own proviſion lands, and the caſualty of a fallow field, the ſlaves have a weekly allowance of grain, varying in different plantations, from one to three pounds, under the nominal meaſure of from two to eight pints. A few plantations go near to five pounds; one or two as far as ſix. They have alſo from three to eight herrings a week. In general, they are far from being well or plentifully fed.* They

* The practice of turning all our lands to the growth of the ſugar cane, and neglecting the culture of proviſions for the ſlaves, and of artificial graſs for the cattle, has lately ariſen equally from the demands of extravagance in our abſent planters, and of poverty in thoſe on the ſpot. Sugar, ſugar, is the inceſſant cry of luxury, and of debt. To increaſe the quantity of this commodity, gardens of half an acre have been grubbed up; and that little patch, which he had uſed to till for his own peaſe, or caſſava, has the ſlave been made to dig for the reception of his maſter's ſugar cane. Nor has the little ſkirt of paſture, or half rood of artificial graſs, been more ſpared in this univerſal ſacrifice to would-be greatneſs; while the poor ſlave muſt attempt to make up for this, and every other want but his own, by exertions taken from the hour of wearineſs and hunger. Hence the annual expence of plantations, within leſs than thirty years, has been more than doubled. Hence the ſending of two or three extra caſks of ſugar to market has been attended with an expence of hundreds of pounds in proviſions to ſlaves, in oats to horſes, and in keeping up the ſtock of ſlaves and cattle, worn out, before

They have an yearly allowance of two or three yards of coarſe woollen cloth, called bamboo, to which ſometimes is added for the men a woollen cap, for the women a handkerchief, and perhaps a few yards of Oſnaburghs. At Chriſtmas three holidays are pretended to be given them; but generally Sunday is foiſted in for one, and now and then half of Chriſtmas-day muſt be employed by them in digging yams for their allowance, and in receiving it afterwards, with a pound or two of ſalt-fiſh, or a ſcrap of coarſe Iriſh beef. In Jamaica they have alſo two holidays at Eaſter, and two at Whitſuntide.

Their huts are framed of iſland timber, cut by each man for himſelf in the mountains, and carried down by him and his wife on Sundays. Sometimes the owner will ſupply a board or two to make a door or window ſhutter, but, in general, ſuch materials are ſtolen; nails and hinges

before their time, by indiſcreet extraordinary efforts, and a ſcanty allowance. The peculiar fertility of St. Chriſtopher's has the moſt baneful effects. It enables the greateſt part of its proprietors to live in England; where, inſenſible of the ſufferings of their ſlaves, they think and dream of nothing but ſugar, ſugar; to which, in conſequence, every ſpot of land is condemned. Hence graſs is procured there with more difficulty, and the ſlaves are more ſcantily fed, than in the other iſlands; and the managers are obliged to keep them up to their utmoſt poſſible exertion to preſerve their employment.

hinges are either ſtolen or bought from thoſe who have ſtolen them. This often happens on a plantation where perhaps a thouſand pounds ſterling have been expended on a ſtable for a ſet of Engliſh horſes. Indeed Engliſh horſes are the leaſt neceſſary, yet beſt attended, beſt ſerved, beſt lodged, and moſt expenſively kept, animals poſſeſſed by a ſugar planter.

Negroes bred to mechanic employments, to ſugar boiling, and the like, and ſome domeſtic ſlaves, fare much better than thoſe who work in the field. They have opportunities of retaliating on their maſter for his penurious treatment of them, by purloining from him; and they often ſupply themſelves with neceſſaries by little uſeful jobs in their ſeveral trades. Slaves in the neighbourhood of the towns drive alſo a conſiderable trade with the inhabitants for graſs and cane tops for feeding their horſes.

A ſurgeon is generally employed by the year to attend the ſick ſlaves. His allowance per head varies from fourteen-pence to three ſhillings; in a few inſtances it riſes to three ſhillings and ſix-pence ſterling, beſides being paid for amputations. Some frugal planters truſt to their own ſkill, and James's powder, and Ward's pill; and, then, for the moſt part, a ſurgeon is only called in to pronounce them paſt

paſt recovery. The food of the ſick is often muſty, indigeſtible horſe beans, ſometimes maize, flour, or rice; ſometimes, as a dainty, brown biſcuit. On ſome plantations, the manager is allowed to get, now-and-then, a fowl, or a kid to make ſoup for them. Sometimes the owner ſends the manager a caſk of wine, a few glaſſes of which are ſuppoſed to be for the uſe of the ſick. Where the manager is a married man, the ſick often have a meſs from his table, and caudle, tea, and other comfortable ſlops; and his wife ſuperintends the conduct of the nurſe, and ſees that the pregnant and lying-in women be properly taken care of. But the cuſtom of employing married men on plantations is wearing faſt out. Though married managers alone can take proper care of the ſick, though they ſtay more conſtantly at home, and have numberleſs other advantages over ſingle men, in point of character, faithfulneſs, and application; yet planters have determined it to be better to employ perhaps a diſſipated, careleſs, unfeeling young man, or a grovelling, laſcivious, old batchelor (each with his half ſcore of black or mulattoe pilfering harlots, who, at their will, ſelect for him, from among the ſlaves, the objects of his favour or hatred) rather than allow a married woman to be entertained on the plantation.*

In

* The pretence of this encouragement given to profligacy, is, that a family requires more attendants, and conſumes more ſugar

In the year 1774, or before the American war, the ſeveral articles that a ſlave had annually returned to him out of his labour, were, in too many plantations, within the following proportion. In others, his allowance of food conſiderably exceeded what is here mentioned:

ſugar than a ſingle man; but the contrary is the fact in a very high degree; and there is not in the ſingle man the attention, and perſevering care of a ſenſible woman, (ſuch, in an highly uſeful degree, is almoſt every manager's wife whom I know) in things within her province, which, even, were the aſſertion true, would more than balance the account.

I mean not to comprehend every ſingle man in the full extent of this cenſures. Some ſhew the wretches under them every mark of attention that their own ſolitary ſtate leaves in their power. But all muſt paſs through the hands of ſome inconſiderate boy overſeer, or ſome unfeeling black or mulattoe concubine. And where the ſingle man is a gadding, goſſipping reveller, (a character ſometimes to be met with) inconceivable are the miſeries to which the ſlaves are ſubjected. The neceſſaries, where any are allotted for the ſick, (and heaven knows, on the beſt plantations, they are trivial enough!) are devoured as a morſel, by that legion of harlots and their children, with which the plantation abounds. Often, while the manager is feaſting abroad, careleſs and ignorant of what has happened, ſome hapleſs wretch among the ſlaves is taken ill, and unnoticed, unpitied, dies, without even the poor comfort of a ſurgeon, in his laſt moments, to ſay, "It is now too late." When the unripe female ſlave has become the new object of the manager's attachment, ſhe becomes an object of envy to the more experienced dames that have gone before her, and muſt think herſelf lucky, if ſhe pays not with her life the forfeit of her youthful attractions. In ſhort, in the caſe ſuppoſed, ſhameleſs profligacy uſurps the place of decency, ſympathy, morality, and religion; and headlong unthinking luſt alone produces all the waſting effects of diſhoneſty, cruelty, and oppreſſion.

Annual

	£.	s.	d.
Annual allowance of rice, flour, maize, beans, or other grain,	0	12	0
Ditto of herrings, and his fiſh, or ſcrap of ſalt beef, at Chriſtmas,	0	8	0
Ditto clothing,	0	3	6
Surgeon, quack medicines, and extraordinary neceſſaries when ſick,	0	2	6
Whole annual allowance	1	6	0

The ordinary puniſhments of ſlaves, for the common crimes of neglect, abſence from work, eating the ſugar cane, theft, are cart whipping, beating with a ſtick, ſometimes to the breaking of bones, the chain, an iron crook about the neck, a large iron pudding or ring about the ancle, and confinement in the dungeon. There have been inſtances of ſlitting of ears, breaking of limbs, ſo as to make amputation neceſſary, beating out of eyes, and caſtration; but they ſeldom happen, eſpecially of late years, and though they bring no laſting diſgrace on the perpetrator, have, for ſome time paſt, been generally mentioned with indignation. It is yet true, that the unfeeling application of the ordinary puniſhments ruins the conſtitution, and ſhortens the life of many a poor wretch.*

To

* In a certain colony, no leſs than two chief judges within theſe thirty years, have been celebrated for cutting off or maſhing

To avoid any miſconſtruction, I muſt here obſerve, that the labour, the diet, the puniſhments, in ſhort, the general treatment of ſlaves, depend on the character of the owner or manager; and that in ſome particular plantations (the grievance of picking graſs, and the circumſtance of their being ſo long as ſixteen hours out of the twenty-four under the laſh of the whip, excepted) they enjoy as much eaſe and indulgence as are compatible with their preſent ſtate of ignorance and dependence, and the accurate methodical cultivation of a ſugar plantation. But this caſe and this indulgence, though due from all maſters to all ſlaves, are not deemed matter of right, but of kindneſs or favour; and too many are ſet over them, who want both humanity and diſcretion to ſee either the obligation or advantage of ſuch treatment; too many who are too lazy to conſult any principle but preſent caprice in their conduct towards them. I have heard managers boaſt of

maſhing (ſo as to make amputation neceſſary) the limbs of their ſlaves. In one caſe a ſurgeon was called in to operate; but he anſwered, he was not obliged to be the inſtrument of another man's cruelty. His honour had it then performed by a cooper's adze, and the wretch was left to bleed to death, without attention, or dreſſing. When he became convulſed, in the agonies of death, the ſurgeon was again haſtily ſent for, and came in time to pronounce him dead. People ſtared at the recital, but made no enquiry for blood. In the other caſe the limb was maſhed with a ſledge hammer, and then it was amputated by a ſurgeon, and the maimed wretch lived ſome years.

not

not having ordered twelve ſtripes in twelve months among 120 ſlaves. There are alſo managers who may boaſt, and there have been ſome who have boaſted, of having given, every now-and-then, what they call a cool hundred for the ſlighteſt offences. Yet, were this laſt even a ſolitary character, in a community, he ought to be an object of police, and be compelled to revere the claims of human nature.

We cannot paſs over in ſilence the uſual treatment of pregnant women and nurſes. In almoſt every plantation they are fond of placing every negroe who can wield an hoe in the field gang; ſo fond, that hardly any remonſtrance from the ſurgeon can, in many caſes, ſave a poor diſeaſed wretch from the labour; though, if method prevailed, work may be found on the plantation equally neceſſary and proportioned to every various degree of ability; and though one or two days attempts in the field be ſure to lay them up in the hoſpital for weeks.

At this work are pregnant women often kept during the laſt months of their pregnancy, and hence ſuffer many an abortion; which ſome managers are unfeeling enough to expreſs their

joy at, becauſe the woman, on recovery, having no child to care for, will have no pretence for indulgence.

If, after all, ſhe carries her burden the full time, ſhe muſt be delivered in a dark, damp, ſmoky hut, perhaps without a rag in which to wrap her child, except the manager has a wife to ſympathize with her wants. Hence the frequent loſs of negroe children by cramp and convulſions within the month. A lying-in woman is allowed three, in ſome plantations four weeks for recovery. She then takes the field with her child, and hoe or bill. The infant is placed in the furrow, near her, generally expoſed naked, or almoſt naked, to the ſun and rain, on a kid ſkin, or ſuch rags as ſhe can procure. Some very few people give nurſes an extra allowance. In general, no other attention is paid to their condition, except perhaps to excuſe them from the picking of graſs.

Though ſlaves be now raiſed to a price that few old ſettled plantations can afford to give, yet this is all the care taken in moſt of them to raiſe a young generation; while Creoles or native Weſt Indian negroes are univerſally acknowledged to be more hardy, diligent, and truſty than Africans. Managers, to whoſe care plantations are left, hold their places, as we have obſerved, by ſo precarious a tenure, that they

they too often confine their views to the making of the greateſt preſent exertion that is poſſible, (which, indeed, their employers preſs them to do) without looking forward to what may happen fifteen years hence *.

SECT.

* Under the impreſſion of this negligence, let me propoſe the remedy. Let two rooms be added to the hoſpital, one for the reception of lying-in women, the other for the ſucking children, while their mothers are at work. The whole ſhould be placed ſo as to be convenient for the inſpection of the manager's wife, whom we eſteem to be as neceſſary a perſon on a plantation as the manager himſelf; and who, on moſt plantations, may have ſufficient employment in taking care of the keys in her huſband's abſence on buſineſs, or at courts, (many overſeers not being truſt-worthy) to ſee the ſickly negroes fed, the infants properly taken care of, and the nurſe do her duty in the hoſpital. For theſe and the like offices, in St. Croix, it is uſual to give her a ſalary, diſtinct from her huſband. Let two elderly handy women be choſen to attend the children, keep them clean, and feed them with ſpoon-meat. For the firſt ſix months, nurſes ſhould be kept at moderate labour near the hoſpital, to be at hand to ſuckle their children, from time to time. After that period, they may go through the ordinary work of the plantation, except the picking of graſs. They ſhould have an extraordinary allowance of food both in quantity and quality. Every healthy child, preſented to the maſter weaned, ſhould intitle the mother to a complete ſuit of clothes. Every woman, that has three children at work in the field, ſhould be excuſed all field work.

We have ſeveral plantations, where by care and mild treatment, and a judicious, or caſually juſt proportion between the ſexes at firſt, the ſlaves increaſe from the births; and this might be the caſe in all, if the dictates of prudence and humanity were obeyed. To give an inſtance in point: there are two plantations, bordering on each other, of nearly the ſame extent. About twenty years ago they were nearly equally

SECT. VII.

Maſter and Slave in particular Inſtances.

IT has been obſerved, that there is no law in the colonies to reſtrain the ill-behaviour or cruelty of a maſter to his ſlave. It is not meant to be inſinuated from this, that the want of laws to ſecure good treatment to them expoſeth them to all the ill uſage, that may be ſuppoſed naturally to ariſe from ſuch neglect. The humanity of many maſters more than ſupplies the want of laws in every other reſpect, but that of improvement; the attachment of others has in them a like effect. In ſome caſes, good ſenſe, a regard for their reputation, and a well informed conviction of their intereſt, induce men to treat their ſlaves with diſcretion and humanity. The ſlaves of many a planter poſſeſs advantages beyond what the labourer even in Britain enjoys. It

equally ſtocked with ſlaves: on the one the allowance has been more plentiful, and the managers have been more conſiderate than on the other. Here the ſlaves are ſtrong, hearty, and increaſed from the births. The other manager boaſts of his pinching and ſaving: and that plantation requires an almoſt annual ſupply of eight or ten negroes to keep up the ſtock. And, till lately, that he, through lazineſs, and abſolute neglect of his employer's intereſt, as he underſtood it, has relaxed in his diſcipline, the ſlaves were a ſtarving heartleſs crew. Indeed, at this time, none were left but ſuch whoſe natural ſtrength of conſtitution ſtood proof againſt exceſs of labour, ſeverity of puniſhment, and the laſt tolerable degree of famine.

It is true the ſlave cannnot hope, as the other may, to raiſe himſelf, or his children above their preſent condition; or by his induſtry to put himſelf or them on a footing with his maſter; a ſpur to exertion and emulation that muſt ever diſtinguiſh and ennoble freedom: yet his work, all but that vile picking of graſs, which in St. Chriſtopher's is an intolerable burden, is in general eaſier; his life paſſes more happily on, and he entertains no anxious thoughts about his expences when ſick, or his maintenance when old. Slaves chiefly ſuffer, where they are the property of an ignorant, low-minded, narrow-hearted wretch, or of one indigent and involved, or of a man who makes a figure beyond his income in England, or when they are ſubmitted to ſome raw lad, or untaught unfeeling manager or overſeer. And men in ſuch circumſtances, and of ſuch diſpoſitions, are to be found in too great a proportion in every community, to have abandoned to their ignorance, their cruelty, prejudice, parſimony, or ſelfiſhneſs, ſo many thouſands of their fellow-creatures as are really ſubjected to them in our colonies.

I have now in contemplation before me, a planter, who conceives himſelf to be a conſcientious man. This man ſells every year ſugar and rum to the amount of 10,000 l. or 15,000 l. ſterling, beſides duties and freight; the produce

of

of his ſlaves labour, in number above 500. Though his lands have no particular advantages of proviſion grounds above his neighbours, and though he never was remarkable for allowing them any extraordinary time to work ſuch ground, if it had been allotted to them, nay, is notorious for keeping them drawling on at work under the eye of his drivers and overſeers, from earlieſt dawn to midnight, from month to month, without reſpite or relaxation; yet it is only of late years, that he has afforded them any thing above ſix herrings a week, and thoſe not very regularly ſupplied. His manager, indeed, uſed to ſteal, now-and-then, from his horſes, a buſhel or two of beans to divide among the moſt emaciated ſlaves; but it was not the cuſtom of the plantation to give them any allowance of food. Some years ago, his attornies took the opportunity of his making a voyage to England, to give his ſlaves an allowance of grain which has ſince been continued, and has gradually been raiſed from a ſcanty pound per week to nearly the common allowance of ſix nominal pints, that may weigh about two pounds and an half. Indeed, ſuch was this man's original prejudice againſt feeding his negroes, and ſo unable were they, without feeding, to exiſt in a ſtate capable of labour, that, greatly to the leſſening of his income, it was his cuſtom to keep on making ſugar, almoſt throughout the whole year, in a lifeleſs,

lifeleſs, inactive manner, in order that his ſlaves might have ſome ſubſiſtence from the cane juice. Before the period of which we ſpeak, ſlaves had much more proviſion ground allotted to them, and, being leſs hurried by the overſeers, were better able to cultivate. When luxury came in, like a torrent, among the planters, and ſeized with violence on the ſlaves little ſpots, and demanded the whole of their time, not leaving even to ſleep its due, the neceſſity of providing o her food for them from foreign parts was but ſlowly perceived, and thouſands had periſhed before the loſs was traced to its proper cauſe; and this man, of whom we write, was one of the laſt who was convinced that his ſlaves muſt be fed, if work was to be expected from them. Now can it be affirmed, that ſuch a perſon would not have reaped an advantage from a law that ſhould have directed him how to feed his ſlaves, or that ſlaves belonging to ſuch a man would not have been happier in themſelves, more profitable to their owner, and better and more uſeful members of the ſtate, if they could have claimed the benefit of a law, I will not ſay to vindicate for them the common rights of humanity, but to ſecure to them the full exertion of their animal powers. And may we not add, that men ſo uſeful to ſociety in their miſmanaged ſtate, and capable of being rendered infinitely more profitable, have demands on ſo-

ciety for much better entertainment than a bit of ſalted herring, or a little raw cane juice?

And yet, had ſuch planters as we have been ſpeaking of the ſenſe to diſcern it, wiſdom would teach them a more liberal plan of policy, and make the dictates of humanity, or even of prudence alone, ſtand in ſtead of a thouſand laws. A gentleman, who lately died here, gave his ſlaves nearly double the proportion of food that is given by many, who value themſelves on feeding them very high; and he frequently ſaid, that, could he afford it, he would increaſe their allowance ſtill further. He parcelled out to them a larger proportion of his uſeful ground than moſt of his neighbours, for the cultivation of their roots and vegetables, and it lay more convenient for tillage. His ſlaves had all ſome little property, a hog, a goat, a trifle of money made by the ſale of the produce of their little gardens, or of their weekly allowance of food; and they were all able to keep themſelves decently clothed. He enlarged the gang to ſuch a number, as not to be under the neceſſity of working them beyond their ſtrength, or at unſeaſonable hours. In wet weather, he contrived to employ them near the works for the benefit of ſhelter; and they all had comfortable huts to receive them after the labour of the day. He allowed them to exchange their proviſions for money,

ney, or any other ſpecies of food more agreeable to them, and it was to enable them to indulge their taſte for variety, that he wiſhed to increaſe an allowance, otherwiſe ſufficient for them. He ſeemed to have hit the medium between governing too much and too little: his people were always ready at command; but they had the full power of themſelves and their time, when the plantation work did not employ them.

When he left off the purchaſing of new ſlaves, he poſſeſſed about one hundred and ſixty. In four years they were increaſed from the births to one hundred and eighty. In *eight years* he had loſt by old age and chronic complaints about *ten*, and a few more by the natural ſmall-pox, who, when the others were inoculated, were paſſed over, on the ſuppoſition of their having formerly had the diſeaſe. Some few infants were, I believe, alſo loſt within the month; and the proportion of breeding women was ſmall. The above is not the common proportion of deaths in any place. It is not an unuſual thing on the ſame iſland to loſe *in one year* out of ſuch a number, *ten*, *twelve*, nay, as far as *twenty*, by fevers, fluxes, dropſies, the effect of too much work, and too little food and care. In ſome plantations of the like extent, it is neceſſary to keep up the gang by an almoſt annual addition

addition of eight or ten new ſlaves. His whoſe expence for phyſic, during the three laſt years of this period, was within half of the annual allowance uſually paid for ſuch a number. Now, if we take into account the labour loſt by the ſickneſs of thoſe numbers that muſt be taken ill, where many die, the expence of recruits, and the puny, weakly, inefficient ſtate of the whole, where ſo much is ſuffered from inattention, the difference in point of intereſt between diſcreet and hard uſage is great in favour of humanity.

Farther, in plantations, where ſlaves are ill fed, hard worked, and ſeverely puniſhed, it is a circumſtance common for a tenth, and even as far as a fourth part of the working ſlaves, to go off and ſkulk in the mountains, ſome for months together. The culture of the plantation is interrupted by the loſs of their labour, while they, by lying out in the woods, and learning there to eat dirt or clay, often contract diſorders, of which they never recover. This gentleman, in the laſt eight years of his life, had only one ſlave who abſented himſelf two days, on having had ſome words with the overſeer, for having debauched one of his wives. Theſe particulars taken together, are not deſpicable advantages of fellowfeeling and humanity; and if the like care was extended to the improvement of their minds, they, who were ſo well cared

cared for in what reſpects the body, might in time be brought to pay ſome attention to what concerns the ſoul.

It is pleaſant to record ſuch an inſtance, and, did I not fear to awaken detraction, I would in order to humble European pride, celebrate him by name, as a Creole of at leaſt four deſcents, the friend of the author, and a man of more conſiderable humanity in private, and more comprehenſive generoſity in public life, than (except in one or two caſes more) has ever come within my notice. But this gentleman had chiefly in view the eaſe and happineſs of his own ſlaves: perhaps an example, where profit is the object, may be more convincing. A young man has the care of a conſiderable plantation in the neighbourhood: his character depends on its thriving condition, and the profitable returns made to the abſent owner. The ſlaves, when he took charge of them, were a puny weakly gang, and fewer in number than in other plantations of the ſame extent. The plantation is particularly laborious, yet the work is more forward, and better finiſhed, the ſlaves more healthy, the deaths fewer, the crops greater, the rum in an higher proportion, and the ſugar better and higher priced, than in the plantations around it.

This

This is the ſecret of his management. He is a ſlave to method. If once he hath taken public notice of a treſpaſs againſt the eſtabliſhed diſcipline, he never pardons, except when, in a particular caſe, he obliges the culprit to find ſome reputable fellow-ſlave, to become ſecurity with him for his good behaviour. He attends carefully to his own duty, and therefore few under him dare to be negligent; ſo that he ſeldom has occaſion to correct. The trial of all treſpaſſes, and diſpenſation of puniſhments, are held in preſence of the gang. The ſentence is accompanied with a public explanation of the fault, and an exhortation to avoid it; and often the contempt and reproach of the culprit's fellows make the ſevereſt part of the correction. If the whole gang has behaved remarkably well, throughout the week, he diſtributes ſome little reward among them, or, if the work permits, gives them Saturday afternoon to themſelves. If a ſlave has been remarkably diligent, he gets ſome money, a bit of beef, or other trifle on Sunday. Sometimes he affects to diſcover remarkable diligence in a lazy ſlave, and rewards it as if real, and thus encourages him to exert himſelf, and excites thoſe who deſpiſed him, ſtill more to out-do him. If two or three behave remarkably ill, the uſual indulgence or reward is with-held from the gang. This makes them become guardians of each other's conduct, and fear

fear the ſcorn and reſentment of their companions, more than their maſter's power. He embraces every occaſion to harangue them on their duty, and on the advantage of obedience, and good behaviour; and this cuſtom has inſenſibly introduced among them the ſeeds of ſentiment, and moral diſtinction. Their allowance of food is double to that of plantations where they pretend to give the ſame number of pints of grain. When they hole, or hand plough, the land, they have an extraordinary allowance of food, and are indulged with rum and water to drink. The ſick, and their nurſe, are put under his wife's direction, and any remarkably puny negro is employed about the houſe and kitchen.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Advancement of Slaves would augment their Social Importance.

IN the preceding chapter, we have contraſted ſlavery, as it has been variouſly enforced among different nations, over the unfortunate, with thoſe ranks, into which ſociety naturally, and profitably, ſeparates its members. In this laſt ſtate, we obſerve a rule originating in our conſtitution, by our Creator's will, that leads on each individual from his own ſecurity and happineſs, to form the happineſs and ſecurity of the community to which he belongs. In the other, the capricious will of individuals is the only law of their dependents, and, without once conſulting their welfare, concludes all their feelings, and all their deareſt intereſts. And all maſters, in proportion as they themſelves are free, are, for their mutual profit, conſpired together to rivet, and extend the chains of ſlavery, as far as their power extends.

This unnatural ſtate of mankind has, more or leſs, departed from the dictates of humanity, in proportion as the diſpoſition of maſters, and the views of legiſlators, have overlooked or conſidered

dered the general rights of mankind. The cuſtoms and manners of different nations have, in ſome inſtances, ſoftened the lot of miſerable ſlaves; in others have encouraged the head-long cruelty of maſters. But in the Britiſh plantations, the inſolence ariſing from the keen ſenſe of our own freedom, (and yet why ſhould not a keener ſympathy with ſuffering humanity operate on our feelings) and the inceſſant demands of luxury, and extravagance, that make themſelves to be heard, and obeyed from the capital acroſs the vaſt atlantic, have there ſunk human nature down to the loweſt depth of wretchedneſs. Hunger, miſtruſt, oppreſſion, ignorance, produce in the ſlaves worthleſſneſs, and crimes; and the avarice and cruelty, that contrived the faults, exact puniſhment for them with as much effrontery, as if they who made them ſlaves, and thereby deprived them of every virtuous feeling, and every ſpur to emulation, were not anſwerable in their own perſons for the baſe effects. Do we wiſh to form adequate notions of their miſery? Let us imagine (and would heaven it were only imagination!) maſters and overſeers, with uplifted whips, clanking chains, and preſſing hunger, forcing their forlorn ſlaves to commit every horrid crime that virtue ſhrinks at, and with the ſame weapons puniſhing the perpetration, not to the extremity indeed that nature can bear, but till the whole man ſinks under them. But to make the repreſentation complete,

complete, we muſt alſo draw humanity, bleeding over the horrid ſcene, and longing, eagerly longing, to be able to vindicate her own rights. Still, whatever ſhe may urge, it will have little weight, if avarice or luxury oppoſe her claim. We are exceedingly ready, it is the turn of the age, to expreſs ourſelves ſorrowfully, when any act of oppreſſion, or unjuſt ſuffering, is related before us; the generous ſentiment flows glibly off our tongues, charity ſeems to dictate every ſympathizing phraſe, and vanity comes cheerfully forward to make her offering. But whom ſhall we find willing to ſacrifice his amuſement or his pleaſure, to obey the call of humanity? Who to relieve the ſufferings of the wretched ſlave, will boldly encounter the oppreſſor's rage, or offer up ſelfiſh intereſt at the altar of mercy? Why, then, hath the active zeal of the benevolent Mr. Granville Sharp, and a few others, in the buſineſs that we now agitate, hitherto made the unfeeling indifference of our age, and nation, but the more conſpicuous?

We muſt not therefore ſtop at gaining over humanity to our ſide, but go on to ſhew, that ſociety is deeply intereſted in advancing the condition of ſlaves, and that it would even be for the benefit of their immediate maſters, that they ſhould be ſubject only to the laws. As the cravings of luxury and extravagance have of late begun to make inroads, even on the ſlave's partial

partial reſpite from toil on the ſabbath; we will, in the mean time ſhew, till this much-to-be-deſired freedom can be brought gradually about, how much the maſter ſins, not only againſt heaven, but his own immediate intereſt, when he forces his ſlave to toil for him on this ſacred day. And ſo low is their ſtate, that we ſhall not intirely loſe the purpoſe of this undertaking, if we vindicate for them only their legal claim to this indulgence. To make the reader the better acquainted with the ſubject of our inquiry, we will premiſe a ſhort account of the preſent importance of the ſlaves in our ſugar colonies. And we hope to leave ſelfiſhneſs, and private intereſt, without excuſe, for continuing the heavy yoke which now oppreſſes them.

SECT. I.

Their preſent Importance to Society as Slaves.

IN treating of this ſubject, the author finds a difficulty in ſuppreſſing his feelings. How ſhall a man, who is firmly convinced that religion, and law, muſt go hand in hand, and extend their influence over every individual, in order to ſecure the full purpoſes of ſociety, paſs over, without cenſure, a conduct both in governors and people, which, reſpecting our colonies, is wholly regardleſs of theſe important points; even

even among thoſe, who have always been acknowledged as citizens? All civilized ſtates, hitherto, have had an eſtabliſhed religion. An eſtabliſhed religion has a ſtrong influence on every mode that is tolerated, though not eſtabliſhed. The church of England, particularly, is conſidered by all ſober people, as the great ſtay of the conſtitution; and it is a fact, that the enemies of the one always aim their attacks at the other. But in the places of which I write, with hardly one exception, neither is law animated by religion, nor is religion ſupported by law. Even common opinion has no check to oppoſe to the moſt ſcandalous crimes, nor does it operate to reſtrain the moſt indecent enormities.*

This

* In this picture, I mean not a general charge of depravity, but of careleſſneſs and indolence, that fix neither puniſhment nor diſgrace on the greateſt irregularities. When it is conſidered, that neither religion nor common opinion have any check in theſe iſlands on perſonal behaviour, it is not ſo ſurprizing that many heinous crimes ſhould ſhew themſelves, as that they ſhould continue to be confined to the ſmaller number in a country, where law attends to nothing but the ſecurity of a man's property.

It is indeed true of the inhabitants, that though ſome individuals may, and actually do, commit the moſt flagrant offences, not without puniſhment only, but even without bluſhing, yet they are in general much better than their rulers. Within theſe five years, the grand jury of a certain colony ſtrove in vain to bring the complicated crime of murder and inceſt to a trial. The whole bench of juſtices, and king's council, without even ſuppoſing the man innocent, united to oppoſe

This obſervation of the neglect of all appearance of religion in the colonies is truly diſcouraging, and leads directly to this juſt and mournful concluſion concerning ſlaves: "That "the government which pays no attention to "the moral and religious conduct of its liege "ſubjects, can be expected to do but little for "the improvement of ſlaves." In theſe we behold a wretched race of mortals, who are conſidered as mere machines or inſtruments of our profit, of our luxury, of our caprice, without feelings, without rights, without proſpects: —Deſpiſed beings, who have found no friend, helper, or protector; who have not influence with a legiſlature, that from year to year is employed in making acts in favour of horned cattle, and aſcertaining the rights of partridges and dogs, to get a ſtatute paſſed, (I will not ſay for their benefit as reaſonable creatures, but) for their feelings and utility as mere animals, or inſtruments of labour; who cannot procure an edict to prevent the leaſt particle of the unalienable rights of human nature from being wreſted out of their poſſeſſion, by the ignorance, prejudice,

oppoſe the attempt, and protect the culprit, and were able to do it effectually.

Barbadoes is almoſt the only colony, where any tolerable degree of decency is preſerved, reſpecting an eſtabliſhed religion; and though there be many and grievous defects in its conſtitution and government, yet this circumſtance gives it conſiderable advantages in point of decency and civilization above the others, eſpecially the new iſlands.

prejudice, cruelty, revenge, and ſelfiſhneſs of untaught, inconſiderate men, their maſters and their overſeers. And this neglect they meet with from a legiſlature, whoſe chief conſtitutional purpoſe of aſſembling, is to diſpoſe of their conſtituents money, and which, from a very natural inquiry, might have known, that while the ſlaves in our ſugar colonies, exceeded not the fortieth part of the inhabitants of the empire, at the breaking out of the late war, they contributed, in that neglected ſtate, perhaps nearly a ſixth part of its then revenue: a proportion which might be conſiderably increaſed, if the condition of the miſerable wretches themſelves were a little improved.

As this is a bold aſſertion, it will be neceſſary to ſhew, on what *data* I proceed*, in the diſcuſſion of a ſubject, in which exactneſs cannot be expected. I had made my calculations before

* The inhabitants of England and Wales are eſtimated at	7,500,000		
Scotland	1,500,000		
Ireland	2,500,000		
			11,500,000
BRITISH ISLES, &c.			
North America Freemen	2,600,000		
——— Slaves	400,000	3,000,000	
Sugar Colonies Freemen	82,000		
——— ——— Slaves	418,000	500,000	
Colonies			3,500,000
Empire			15,000,000

before America was declared independent, Ireland made a ſeparate ſtate, and Tobago, with all its improvements, given up to France; and it is a ſubject of too much chagrin, to adapt them now to our new condition.

The ſugar colonies produce ſugar, rum, coffee, cocoa, cotton, ginger, pimento, indigo, tobacco, aloes, mahogany, ſweetmeats, &c. Theſe valued all as caſks of raw ſugar, each of 1200 lb. at the King's beam, London, may be eſtimated in moderately productive years, as below. To complete the view, the inhabitants are added.

Iſlands	Free Inhabitants	Slaves	Staple reduced to caſks of Sugar
Barbadoes	20,000	80,000	24,000
Tobago	1,000	8,000	6,000
Grenada and Grenadillas	7,000	30,000	36,000
St. Vincent's	4,000	15,000	10,000
Dominica,	4,000	15,000	10,000
Antigua	6,000	36,000	20,000
Montſerrat	2,000	9,000	6,000
Nevis	2,000	10,000	8,000
St. Chriſtopher's	3,000	27,000	20,000
Anquilla, Tortola and its Dependencies	3,000	14,000	10,000
Jamaica & its Dependencies	30,000	174,000	100,000
Total	82,000	418,000	250,000

The ſugar baker in Britain pays for ſugar, the chief article, from £24 to £30 per caſk. Hence the value of the ſtaple is ſeldom below £6,000,000

£6,000,000 per annum. The ſlaves eſtimated at £50 each will exceed the ſum of 20,000,000. The lands, buildings, and other ſtock, may be ſet down at twice this ſum, or £40,000,000. We have then the Weſt-Indian ſtock, exceeding £60,000,000 and giving a yearly produce of 6,000,000. About £1,000,000 of this laſt comes into the exchequer, for duties on ſugar, rum, &c. And there cannot be leſs than £800,000 raiſed on the trade of the iſlands, and on the planters, who reſide, and ſpend their fortunes in England. The freight, agency, light-houſe money, ſtorage, inſurance, and other incidental charges, are a full million more of gain to Britain. And as the whole is put in motion, and draws its worth from the labour of ſlaves, it clearly proves their preſent importance, and their claim to national attention.

Indeed, the whole balance of their annual produce may be ſuppoſed as remaining with Britain. For there is not reſerved in the colonies, a part ſufficient to make the neceſſary improvements, in many caſes, not even to keep up the ſtock. And even what is ſpent in the iſlands, is laid out in the purchaſe of Britiſh or American commodities; but much the largeſt ſhare is kept in Britain, to be ſpent, or to pay the intereſt of five or ſix millions of money due there. In ſhort, they may be conſidered as manufactories eſtabliſhed in convenient diſtant places, that draw

draw all their utenſils from, and ſend all their produce to, the mother country.

I have ſuppoſed the medium produce to be £6,000,000, as the prime coſt in Britain; but after paſſing through the hands of the manufacturer, it muſt coſt the conſumer full £8,000,000.

SECT. II.

Their preſent importance to Society would be increaſed by Freedom.

FROM this view of the importance of our ſlaves, in their preſent ſtate, (for they alone ſtamp a value on Weſt-Indian property) it will clearly follow, that to improve and advance their condition in ſocial, to encourage and inſtruct them in moral life, would be as politically profitable, as it is religious and humane. Were their condition advanced, they would become more worthy, more valuable ſubjects. They would produce much more by their labour, and agreeably to that great purpoſe of modern police, financeering, by the conſumption of more manufactures, they would increaſe the public revenue.*

Inſtead

* A French author ſneers at Boyle, for propoſing to propagate Chriſtianity among ſavages, with a view to make them

Inſtead of confining their demands, as at preſent, to a few coarſe woollens and Oſnaburgs, to a little grain, a few herrings, and ſalt-fiſh, they would open a new traffic in every branch of trade, and while they improved our commerce, they would add to the ſtrength and ſecurity of the colonies. The few, who by accident, or indulgence, have been advanced in ſocial life, make even now a conſiderable addition to the internal conſumption of the white inhabitants. And how much to be preferred, a numerous free peaſantry is to a few over-grown families, and their herds of naked, half ſtarved ſlaves, is too evident to need explanation.

There are about 30,000 inhabitants in St. Chriſtopher's, of which not more than one in ten is free. They are in dread of inſurrections in time of peace, and in time of war are expoſed to every ſort of depredation; every pitiful privateer, while hovering around, alarming the coaſt, and endangering their ſafety. For at theſe times the ſlaves, far from adding to their ſtrength,

wear clothes, and thereby increaſe the demand for Engliſh manufactures. Perhaps he aimed to catch men, by the bait of intereſt, who were dead to ſentiments of religion and humanity. Still the obſervation ſhews, how much a progreſs in religion draws after it ſocial advantages, and civilization, of which the Moravian miſſions in Greenland are a moſt convincing proof.

ſtrength, weaken and diminiſh it. But if all the inhabitants were free, and had property and families to fight for, what ſhould they have to fear, who could draw out full 8000 hardy men, habituated to the climate, and, within five hours, have them ranged in order againſt any enemy that might aſſail them.

That ſugar may be made by white labourers, appeared in the firſt ſettlement of our iſlands, eſpecially Barbadoes. In the moſt flouriſhing ſtate of that Iſland, the ſugar-cane was chiefly cultivated by white ſervants. It has ſenſibly and gradually decayed in trade and importance, ſince the majority of its inhabitants has been changed from free-men to ſlaves. The ſtock of the planter has indeed been increaſed with the number, and the price of his ſlaves; but his neat produce has not kept pace with it. Even after this iſland had been ſome time on the decline, one plantation *(the Bell)* fitted out a company of ſoldiers for the expedition formed in 1691, under Codrington, againſt Guadaloupe. If there be now on the ſame ſpot, four white men, including the proprietor, able to bear arms, it is a great proportion. From this we may judge, how much the iſland has ſince loſt in trade and ſecurity, even after allowing largely in the calculation. Yet it continues

to ſupport a greater proportion of free-men than our other iſlands.*

To this inſtance of making ſugar by freemen, we may add the example of Cochin China. It ſupplies the populous empire of China with ſugar, made by free-men. The quantity exported is eſtimated at 800,000,000 pound, or about 500,000 of caſks, which greatly exceeds the quantity of ſugar made in the iſles, and continent of America, by African ſlaves. And this quantity may be ſuppoſed capable of being greatly increaſed, if the manufacture was carried on in the ſame accurate manner as in the European colonies. For, according to Le Poivre, the cane juice is only boiled into ſyrup at the place of growth, and in that ſtate is carried to the ſeveral towns, to be ſold to the ſugar baker, who boils, refines, and candies it. After this tedious proceſs, brown ſugar is ſold at 3s. 4d. per hundred pound, white ſugar 6s. 8d. and candied ſugar at 8s. In our iſlands brown ſugar is worth by the 100 pound, from 20s. to 36s. ſterling, and yet many of our proprietors cannot pay their intereſt-money, and ſupport their ſtock, without ſuppoſing any ſhare of

* About the time of the reſtoration, the iſland of St. Chriſtopher's contained about 10,000 French and Engliſh, capable of bearing arms. About 1650, Nevis could arm above 5000. The whole preſent militia of both iſlands exceeds not 1000. Such a deſtroyer is ſlavery of population.

of the produce to be allotted as the returns of their own capital.

SECT. III.

Their Maſters would be profited by their advancement.

IT might be difficult for government to form a plan, that ſhould at once extend full liberty to, and thereby beſtow due rank on our ſlaves, without immediately indangering the property of their maſters, and of the trading part of the nation connected with them in buſineſs and intereſt. And it muſt be acknowledged, that ſuch at preſent is the ignorant, helpleſs condition of far the greater part of the ſlaves, that full liberty would be no bleſſing to them. They need a maſter to provide and care for them. The plan, propoſed to advance and inſtruct them, muſt be gentle, ſlow in its progreſs, keeping pace with the opening of their minds, and looking forward for its completion to a diſtant period.

The ſlaves, in that little ſpot, St. Chriſtopher's, moderately appraiſed, would exceed £1,300,000, and as they are part of a ſtock of £4,000,000, and give effect and life to that

that ſtock, the fruits of their labours being in moſt years worth to the conſumers, £ 700,000, it is evident that an immenſe change or rather annihilation of property would be occaſioned, if this ſcheme took at once effect in the colonies; nor would it be poſſible to find the maſters an equivalent.

While I acknowledge this in favour of the maſter, as things are now ſituated, I am firmly of opinion, that a ſugar plantation might be cultivated to more advantage, and at much leſs expence, by labourers who were free-men, than by ſlaves. Men who, like ſlaves, are ill treated, ill clothed, and worſe fed, who labour not with any view to their own profit, but for that of a maſter, whom for his barbarity they perhaps abhor, have not ſtrength, nor ſpirits, nor hope to carry them through their taſk. A free-man, labouring for himſelf, in the earning of his wages, whoſe food is portioned out by himſelf, not by an unfeeling boy overſeer; who feels his own vigour, who looks forward to the conveniences of life as connected with his induſtry, will ſurely exert more ſtrength, will ſhew more alacrity, than a ſtarved, depreſſed, diſpirited wretch, who drawls out his taſk with the whip over him.

It is a common day's labour, where the work is carefully performed, for thirty grown ſlaves to

to dig with hoes, in a looſe gravelly ſoil, an acre of ground, into holes of five feet by four, from about ſeven to twelve inches deep, leaving ſpaces between the rows equal at leaſt to half the holes, untouched, to receive the mould. The ſhare of ſuch a piece of work to one ſlave, will be a ſpot of nearly fifty by thirty feet, including the untouched ſpaces. A taſk this, that might be more than doubled, by a labourer of ordinary ſtrength, having ſpirits and inclination to the work.

In St. Chriſtopher's, 16,000 ſlaves, all capable of ſome labour, are employed in the cultivation of about 11,000 acres; for the whole cane-land of the iſland is about 22,000 acres, and each field gives a crop once in two years. This is in the proportion of three ſlaves to the annual culture of two acres; a rate that would be unneceſſary among free-men, and which the Britiſh prices for Weſt Indian produce could alone ſupport. It may be remarked, that this labour has no winter ceſſation.

The common appraiſement of prime field ſlaves, before the American war, was £60 ſterling each; the annual rent of a ſlave was from £6 to £8. The renter enſured them, if valued, at five per cent. or £3 more. A plantation ſlave coſts the employer then, without reckoning food, clothes, phyſic, or taxes, full

£10

£10 per annum, or one ſixth part of his appraiſed value. A number of ſlaves, capable of producing on a plantation, well furniſhed with live ſtock and neceſſary buildings, 100 caſks of ſugar, annually at a medium, making but a moderate allowance for their deaths in ſeaſoning, if bought from the ſlave-merchant, will amount on value, to £6000. In the new iſlands, before ſuch a number could be relied on, they have in every caſe coſt much more; in one, within the author's knowledge, above the double of this ſum. The quantity of ſugar here ſuppoſed, and the rum ariſing from it, in moſt ſituations will not keep the plantation in neceſſary ſtores, and pay the current expences, and ſupply a fund to anſwer ſuch accidents as hurricanes, blaſts, fire, mortality, and unfavourable ſeaſons, and alſo give £1200 to the proprietor, as the produce of his lands, buildings, ſlaves, and other ſtock.

If his ſlaves be conſidered as rented from another man, and he inſures them to the owner, £1000 of this £1200 is immediately to be ſtruck off, as the value of the ſlaves labour. There remains to the proprietor £200, as the return of his lands, buildings, and cattle. In ſuch a plantation the buildings often have coſt £3000 ſterling, ſometimes more; the cattle, horſes, and mules muſt be worth from £600 to £1000. Perhaps the proprietor has paid from £10,000 to £12,000 for the lands. The reader may

may be aſſured this is no ideal calculation, but in the iſland of St. Chriſtopher, though our moſt productive ſugar colony in proportion to its ſize, has frequently come within the author's obſervation. And is labour ſo injudiciouſly laid out in any other part of the world? Can any reaſons be given, why a ſugar planter ſhould prefer the employing of ſlaves to that of free-men, ſeeing with a large diminution of returns, he may have a much larger clear income than at preſent. An argument, that when duly weighed, renders our expectations of the extenſion of liberty, though diſtant, not extravagant.

But we will conſider the policy of employing ſlaves purchaſed with money, in another point of view. In a free country, a peaſant in general executes twice the work of a ſlave in the ſugar colonies; we might go farther, but this is ſufficient for our purpoſe. On the other hand the peaſant's food is more ſound, more plentiful, his clothes more expenſive than thoſe of a ſlave; but not in proportion to the difference in value of their labour, perhaps not exceeding greatly the inſurance, and other incidental charges of ſlavery. In general, this food and raiment are all that the peaſant, as well as the ſlave, reaps from his labour, few of them raiſing themſelves by their induſtry to a ſuperior ſtation; and when they do this, it is effected by ſuperior induſtry, or keenneſs, and greater

parſimony, rather than by extraordinary wages. The whole then of a peaſant's labour (that proportion excepted, which the ſlave in a certain degree alſo claims from his toil) becomes the profit and property of his employer, as fully and truly as if he were a ſlave; with this difference in favour of the firſt, that the obligation, or tie between him and his maſter, ends with the day's, or year's labour, and draws no diſagreeable or expenſive conſequences after it, to either of the parties.

Now from the ſuperior progreſs of population in free countries, compared with that of thoſe wherein ſlavery prevails, when a peaſant dies, his place is immediately ſupplied in the courſe of generation; the employer ſuffers no damage, or loſs of time; and while labour and improvement go equally on, even the public, to which every perſon in a free ſtate may be ſaid to belong, is not ſenſible of the event. In ſhort, in a free ſtate, the death of an individual is like a ſtone caſt into the water, it makes a ſudden ſeparation of the parts, but the water cloſes on it, and ſettles into a ſmooth ſurface, as if no accident had preceded. But to his maſter, the death of a ſlave is a ſenſible ſevere loſs, which he muſt immediately repair, at an heavy expence, that, after being incurred, will not make him the ſame profitable returns, as the labour of a peaſant for which he pays (and that not till after

after the execution of the work) only ſuch a value as he ought to expend in the maintenance of his ſlaves. The eſtimation of uſeful ſlaves, without taking luſt, caprice, or favour into account, is according to their trades and accompliſhments, from £ 50 to £ 300 ſterling. Hence the death of a valuable ſlave becomes a moſt ſerious matter to the maſter, while a peaſant, or tradeſman, will do him ſuperior ſervice, without original expence, or daily riſk to him, or to the public.

This is a view of the ſubject, and a manner of reaſoning in it, which cannot, I apprehend, be controverted, and plainly proves, that could we contrive a method of once getting over the firſt ſhock, which ſuch a change would occaſion, and ſet down free-men and women (who in the common progreſs of population, might ſupport or increaſe their original number, in our colonies) in the room of ſlaves, we ſhould leſſen the nominal value of the neceſſary ſtock, contract the expences of individuals, and much more than double their preſent profit. Here, then, we have an argument againſt ſlavery, which applies equally to the intereſt of the maſter, and the advantage of the public, and ought to gain a fair hearing for every plan, that propoſes to leſſen the numbers, and advance the condition of ſlaves. And were we not afraid of ſtartling the imaginations of people, by the extraordinary

aſſertion,

aſſertion, we would not heſitate to affirm, that were the minds of the negroes once opened, and properly prepared; and were they in general confined to the cultivation of Weſt-Indian produce, and the trades connected with it; and did government introduce from time to time, till things became ſettled on the new baſis, at the expence of the colony, the neceſſary recruits; the general manumiſſion of ſlaves would be attended with no immediate loſs to the planters; and, by taking away the neceſſity of ſupplying themſelves with recruits at their own expence, would be an important ſaving to them. Indeed, after one generation, recruits would not be wanted; freedom would *increaſe* faſter than death *leſſened* their numbers.*

A ſtate

* The reader will be pleaſed with the following ſenſible remarks of a gentleman of Barbadoes, on his peruſing this ſection in manuſcript.

Barbadoes, of all the Weſt-Indian iſlands, can the leaſt afford the immenſe expenſe of an annual ſupply of ſlaves. As the white inhabitants are numerous, ſlavery might be aboliſhed in a few years, without an individual ſuffering by it. The majority of the inhabitants are indigent. There are numbers of ſlaves, who, having been taught trades, are become highly valuable, of whom, one, two, or a few, are frequently the only ſupport of whole white families, who live in indolent poverty on the returns of their labour, and by their death find themſelves reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs, and incapable of doing any thing for themſelves. If this ſort of precarious property were not univerſally relied on, ſo as to have a general ill effect on the manners of the people, they would of neceſſity be forced to be more induſtrious in themſelves, and more œconomical in their

A ſtate of abſolute freedom is indeed a revolution that we may rather wiſh for, than expect for ſome time to ſee, though doubtleſs it is within the plan of Providence, and of man's progreſſive advancement in ſociety. It ſuppoſes a regard for religion, a looking beyond immediate profit, and a ſoundneſs of policy, foreign to the eſtimation, and opinion of the preſent age. To make the plan effectual, it ſhould prevail in every

their expences. If ſlavery were checked, the poor white people, who, at preſent, (from the circumſtance of their living meanly idle on the labours of others,) are perhaps the moſt lifeleſs, inactive ſet of mortals, on the whole earth, would be obliged to exert themſelves in the cultivation of their own, and others lands, and ſoon would perceive their conſtitutions and circumſtances equally improved. The great land-holders would find their expences and their profits go hand in hand; for they would pay only for productive labour. The moſt induſtrious labourers would command the beſt employment, and the moſt punctual pay would conſtantly have the preference. Thus punctuality and application would encourage each other, renew the face of the colony, and put the whip and chain to ſhame. It would be a great ſtep towards this deſirable purpoſe, if the introduction of ſlaves into the colony was prohibited by ſtatute, and all acts that lay fines upon thoſe maſters who free their ſlaves, were repealed. Every method ſhould be uſed, that would induce the people to reſpect the inſtitutions of religion, and wean them from that careleſſneſs reſpecting them, which is ſo prevalent, and has ſuch baneful effects on their manners. The ſlaves in Barbadoes are perhaps more ripe for theſe privileges than thoſe of our other colonies; becauſe the proportion of Creoles, or natives, is greater among them; they are more converſant with the free people, and are leſs pinned down than in other iſlands to digging the ground. It is certain, they have in their preſent ſtate been at different times truſted with arms; corps of them have been formed, and on all occaſions have diſcovered an alacrity that promiſed every poſſible exertion.

every European ſettlement; an event ſo little to be expected from the manners which now prevail, that a man would not venture the imputation of ſuch extravagance, as the bare ſuggeſtion of it would be deemed. For could ſo many oppoſing intereſts be reconciled; and ſhould a partial innovation take place, that preſent bugbear of European policy, the balance of trade, would be ſuppoſed to be in danger.

But were ſlaves inſtructed in the ſimple precepts of religion; were they taught to diſtinguiſh right from wrong; did the law ſecure to them a more plentiful ſubſiſtence, more humane uſage; were they permitted to acquire and enjoy property; were the rights of a family made ſacred; could they look forward to freedom, as the reward of merit, or the purchaſe of induſtry; in ſhort, were they conſidered as having ſome rights, ſome claims, as intitled to ſome unalienable, ſome of the reſerved rights of humane nature; their condition would in conſequence be advanced, they would become more uſeful, more profitable ſubjects, and might even be truſted with arms, in defence of the colony in which they have an intereſt. Indeed it is not their want of arms, but their good ſenſe and moderation, in moſt colonies, that are a preſent ſecurity to the inhabitants. I forbear to ſay more on ſo dangerous a topic.*

SECT.

* It is worthy of obſervation, that though the artificers in the King's dock yards had, from their firſt eſtabliſhment, been engaged,

SECT. IV.

Their Maſters would be profited by allowing their Slaves the privilege of a weekly Sabbath.

WE have proved, that the gradual extenſion of freedom would have the beſt effects reſpecting both

engaged, and liberally paid, by the day, yet within theſe twelve years, it has been found moſt expedient to employ and pay them by the piece, or job; the men earning more, and the public getting more work, and that cheaper done, than in the former method, when they juſt drawled out the preſcribed number of hours, and like Cyrus's well-trained ſoldier, would ſuſpend the up-lifted axe, at the firſt ſtroke of the bell that called them off from their work. Good farmers alſo employ labourers, wherever they can, by the piece, and induſtrious men prefer it, as being mutually moſt profitable. In Kent where there is the greateſt variety of agriculture, almoſt every kind of work is paid for by the piece or job.

If moderate ſkilful planters would ſet down, and reduce into a table, the ſeveral rates of negro-labour, by the day, and a ſtatute were enacted, that ſhould give the ſlave, who had performed this taſk, the reſt of his time to himſelf, or intitle him to wages for what he ſhould do more than this; and if all ſlaves were valued, and permitted by this their extra work gradually to buy out themſelves, or their time; and if it were only provided, that after they became free, they ſhould continue to be employed about the buſineſs of a plantation; in this ſituation, planters might have the original coſt of their ſlaves repaid them, and would ſtill have the ſame people to do their work better than at preſent, for food and raiment; only fewer in number would anſwer their purpoſe, and their intereſt would not be affected by any accident that befel them. The labourers, on the other hand, when their jobs were finiſhed, would

both the maſter and the community. But it will require new regulations, and the conſent of government and people, to eſtabliſh the plan. What follows here has already the ſanction of law, and is now the practice, in proportion to the diſcretion and fellow-feeling of the maſter. The infringement on that reſt of the ſabbath, which we wiſh to vindicate for the ſlave, is an indecent breach, both of religion and law, while it counteracts, in no ſmall degree, its own mean purpoſe of accumulation. But ſuch is the progreſſive nature of the cravings of luxury and avarice, that if the cuſtom once gets a footing, reaſon in vain will ſolicit an hearing; and religion has loſt her influence, and law her authority, ſhould they attempt to interpoſe.

would be their own maſters, and be able to enjoy themſelves, and their families. They would feel an ambition to become worthy members of ſociety, and to partake, with their former maſters, now become their patrons and benefactors, in the inſtitutions of a religion, that conſidered them all as equally the children of the ſame benevolent Father. One immediate conſequence of the relaxation of ſlavery, would be the introduction of ploughs, which have always anſwered wherever they have been tried, and are only thrown aſide, becauſe it is eaſier for a manager to order out a ſlave with his hoe in his hand, than to yoke horſes or cattle in a plough. It is indeed a maxim, in carrying on all labour, never to do that by a man, that you can execute by a brute; nor to do that by an animal, that you can make a mechanical inſtrument perform. Thus all hand-hoe ploughing, except in particular caſes, would be cut off, and all cattle mills for grinding canes would be exchanged for water or wind mills. This method of working out freedom by labour is ſaid to be eſtabliſhed by a law in the Spaniſh colonies, for the encouragement of their ſlaves.

interpoſe. Our only hope remains in being able to pre-occupy the judgment. As this refers to a particular event in one of our colonies, which is too likely to take place in others, the arguments are preſented to the public in their original dreſs; and thoſe, who are beſt acquainted with the treatment that ſlaves uſually meet with, will be leaſt apt to imagine that the author has been too full, or too warm on the ſubject.

An ADDRESS *to the* INHABITANTS *of* ST. CHRISTOPHER'S, *Anno*, 1775, *ſhewing the Claim of Dependents to the Privilege of the Sabbath.*

SIRS,

Within theſe laſt ten months, a cuſtom has been introduced among you, of employing ſlaves in carrying on the ordinary plantation work on Sunday, of ploughing the ground, planting, weeding, and grinding the cane, boiling the ſugar, and diſtilling the rum. It began on a particular plantation, and has found its way to each extremity of the iſland. It is true, it is not yet become general, and many planters firmly expreſs their diſlike of a practice, which, in itſelf impolitic and injudicious, bids fair, if encouraged, to baniſh humanity, and annihilate a religion that barely ſtruggles for exiſtence in our land. But bad examples are contagious; and ſeeming intereſt in ſome and emulation in others will

will go on, as they already have begun, to draw numbers into a cuſtom that flatters induſtry, and feeds the hopes of extravagance and avarice.

No account of this ſpreading violation of our laws and religion having yet been taken by the magiſtracy, the treſpaſſers are induced to believe that law cannot interpoſe to check it: a miſtake which it is neceſſary to correct in men, who think nothing a crime but a deed for which law ordains a puniſhment. As it fell to my lot to take the firſt notice of this unhallowed practice, I have been obliged to pay an attention to the ſubject; and hence I am enabled to aſſure theſe treſpaſſers, who wrap themſelves up in their impunity, that when the caſe is brought before a court, they will not find a lawyer, however profligate his private character may be, who will riſk his profeſſional reputation by undertaking the defence of ſo notorious a breach of human and divine laws: and could they find ſuch a man, no judge or bench of magiſtrates could allow him to plead againſt the laws and religion of his country. Their defence muſt be confined to a ſimple denial of the fact.

If we view the matter in a religious light, the ſabbath is appointed by God for ſuch pious, humane, and even wordly-wiſe purpoſes, as to lead us to conclude, that nothing will more readily draw down judgments on, nor ſooner execute

cute the ruin of, a ſinful community, than a contempt of this benevolent inſtitution. Sabbath-breaking makes a conſtant capital figure among the crimes that kindled God's wrath againſt the Jews. Farther, from God's ſtrict injunction to them, from whom we derive this inſtitution, to puniſh, even to deſtruction, any family or city that they ſhould find guilty of idolatry among them, which was an offence ſimply againſt his authority; we may conclude, that if a community ſuffers an inſult on this law of the ſabbath, which has both his authority and general benevolence in view, to paſs unpuniſhed, it will, by ſuch its neglect, ſubject to his wrath not only individuals that are actually guilty of the crime, but the magiſtracy and people at large, who are thus careleſs of vindicating his honour and the claims of humanity. I will leave it to yourſelves, after what you have lately ſuffered in your ſins, to determine what need you have to give the Governor of the world this new provocation againſt you. Woe be to that community which forces the Deity to reſume the vindication of his laws from the hands of the ordinary magiſtrate. Undiſtinguiſhing ruin will involve the lukewarm profeſſor and hardy treſpaſſer together. May Providence, by your reformation, avert the evil which every thinking man dreads on your account. To contribute to this end, and ſet ſuch right as have

have been unwittingly drawn into the practice, who yet have minds open to conviction, we ſubmit to them the following conſiderations:

The good man, on the ſabbath, interrupts his uſual employments, not only to have leiſure to review his conduct, to improve his mind for futurity, to reflect on, and bleſs God for his mercies, but alſo for the ſake of his dependents: they are indulged with a reſpite from labour, and a weekly feſtival, which make ſervitude tolerable. This compaſſion is followed by its proper reward. Continual toil would wear out the conſtitutions of ſervants long before their natural period of decay; but, during this day of reſt, they renew their ſtrength, and the hopes of its weekly return make them chearfully undergo their common labour. The uſeful ox repays the indulgence in patient enduring.

Indeed, this day of reſt, which God commands us to allow all whom he hath ſubmitted to our rule, is an acknowledgment, that he obligeth us to pay for the dominion he hath granted us over the lower world. And, therefore, though the promulgation and extent of this precept reſt on the poſitive command of God expreſſed in ſcripture, yet is the foundation moral: it is laid deep in the principles of humanity, grows up with obedience to our Creator, and flouriſheth with equity and benevolence to

our

our fellow-creatures. It is a mark of holding our power from God, a right reſerved to himſelf, to ſhew his care of even the meaneſt of his creatures. And it teacheth us, in a manner plain for him that runneth to read it, that we had not our preſent rank in the creation beſtowed on us, to be the unfeeling tyrants, but the merciful protectors, of the inferior world.

But as a contrary practice is now introduced here, with a parade, indeed, of ſuperior induſtry, but a ſovereign contempt of decency, common opinion, religion, and law; we muſt diſcuſs this point of indulgence to dependents, and ſhew, (beſides contradicting the motives above, which I hope have yet ſome influence among mankind) that he, who falls into ſo inconſiderate a practice, ſins againſt prudence, and counteracts that aim after opulence, which can be the only pretence for ſo extraordinary, ſo alarming a conduct. In doing this, we need not enter into any nice phyſical diſquiſition concerning the animal powers of the labouring part of the creation, nor into any train of reaſoning, to ſhew the neceſſity of a frequent ſucceſſion of reſt to labour to preſerve the animal machine from wearing out before the period ſet by nature: we will appeal to your own experience, whether thoſe men reap not the moſt laſting advantages from the labour of their oxen, their horſes, and that ſtill more uſeful, though neglected animal,

mal, called a negroe ſlave, who conſult their ſeveral feelings, and give the ſignal to ceaſe from toil, before the languid effort of wearineſs ſolicits reſpite. Are they the moſt ſucceſsful in the field of induſtry, or do they moſt enjoy the evening of life, who conſtantly put forth all their ſtrength, who riſe early, and late take reſt; or they, who ſo temper labour and reſt, that each deſires the return of the other. Look around among your neighbours, whoſe ſlaves, whoſe cattle, are the moſt healthy, or exert the greateſt vigour; who ſuffers leaſt by their mortality; who reaps moſt from their labour? Is it not he who encourages, favours, ſpares them, who properly nouriſhes them, and never encroaches on the hour of food or reſt? Or can any temporary acquiſition, wrung from unſeaſonable labour, compenſate for an hoſpital filled with wretches dead or dying, for a crew of haggard, diſeaſed ſpectres, whoſe ruined conſtitutions, and famiſhed looks, reproach the avarice of the hard-hearted maſter.

Is it ſaid, in return, that the maſter buys this extraordinary labour, on Sunday, with an extraordinary price. Let me aſk him, who gives this reaſon, would he puſh a generous horſe, till the noble animal himſelf gave out? And is he to care leſs for a creature of his own kind, becauſe anxious to recommend himſelf to his favour by a ſtrained exertion of his ſtrength? The maſter,

maſter, by the very tenure of his authority is obliged to conſult the conſtitution of thoſe who labour for him, that he may reſtrain their efforts within their ability, and keep their ſervice to him within the limits of their own perſonal happineſs. If, as ſome pretend, it be meant to increaſe the allowance of food, by this new cuſtom of Sunday's wages, let them tell why, till now, they have provided ſo ſcantily for their ſlaves, as to make this addition neceſſary; or let them give a good reaſon why a wretch who drudges the ſix days for another man's luxury, ſhould not eat plentifully, and have the ſeventh alſo for a day of reſt.

If the planter ſays he only bribes other mens ſlaves into his Sunday's ſervice, let him go to his neighbour, and aſk him for the uſe of his cattle during the hours allotted for food and reſt, and report his anſwer; or let him attempt to take them away, and work them clandeſtinely, and ſee whether they will not be reclaimed. And ſhall a conſiderate maſter, who works his ſlaves to their full ability; and who, it ſhould be preſumed, feeds them properly, ſuffer them to wear their ſtrength out in another man's ſervice for a little paultry hire, that ought not to be neceſſary for them? Or, if he did, could he expect them to exert themſelves with vigour for him in the week, when their ſtrength has been worn down

down in his neighbour's ſervice on Sunday, and they have not had time to recruit it? God who beſt knows the conſtitution of his creatures, and formed them expreſsly for labour, hath allotted for reſt not only the nightly ſucceſſion of darkneſs and weekly return of the ſabbath, but has divided every ſingle day into ſhort intervals of labour and reſt, by making a frequent repetition of food neceſſary for recruiting and refreſhing the body. And ſhall we pretend to be wiſer than he is, or to know better what the animal conſtitution is capable of performing?

One reaſon is given for this cuſtom, which puts the obſervation of Sunday as a day of reſt, on plantations, wholly in the overſeers power: if a ſlave behaves to the ſatisfaction of the overſeer throughout the week, he is to be indulged with Sunday, if not he ſhall work there on his maſter's field. And this humane reaſon is added, that the common puniſhment of withholding their uſual allowance of food is injudicious, and therefore working on Sunday is ſubſtituted for it. I am ready to give up the propriety of ſtarving men as a mode of puniſhment. But is not the obliging them to work on Sundays alſo to ſtarve them; ſeeing, in the preſent pinched method of feeding them, every ſlave is forced to eke out his portion with his private Sundays labour? And doth not this extraordinary labour on Sunday act as a farther leſſening

leſſening of their allowance, by wearing out their ſtrength in toiling on the day in which they ſhould have had leiſure to recruit it after the week's labour, while the means of acquiring food by private labour to repair this extraordinary waſte are withheld from them.

But we give Sunday, as a day of reſt to our ſlaves, in obedience to the command of our common Father. And nothing but a duty, ſuperior in its conſequences, and immediate in its call, or an unforeſeen opportunity of doing an act of benevolence can ſet it aſide. Now as a duty owing immediately to God, it cannot be affected by any pretended intereſt of our own, or demerit on our ſervants part. Are God's laws to be ſo little eſteemed of, that every unthinking boy, ſet over a few helpleſs wretches, with a whip in his hand, may annul them at pleaſure? Shall he, to puniſh a trifling offence againſt the plantation diſcipline, too frequently exiſting only in his own miſapprehenſion or neglect, be allowed to make havock of the laws of religion and his own duty to God? Unhappy age into which we are fallen, when, leaving the plain road of obedience, we ſet up to reform the laws and religion, not of our country only, but of our God!

It is ſuggeſted further, that in crop time, in particular quarters, the ripe canes are ſo apt

to become tainted, that it is a work of neceſſity to grind them off on Sunday. To this we anſwer, "The God of ſeaſons enjoined the obſervation of the ſabbath, and his laws are ultimately for the benefit of the obedient." The circumſtance here pleaded may be intended for an exerciſe of our truſt in his Providence, but can never come under the deſcription of thoſe works of neceſſity or mercy, that are not only proper, but commendable on Sunday. Sagacity may foreſee, prudence may provide for ſuch accidents; method and good uſage *may*, and where uſed, actually *do*, increaſe the tale of labour, on common days, far beyond what is forced out on this day appointed for reſt. And were not this, which yet may be, in every caſe, true, yet God's veracity and providence are engaged that his ſervants ſhould not ultimately ſuffer by their obedience. But, as we have remarked, and ſhall further prove, the truth is, this continued toil over-acts the purpoſe of induſtry, without ſuppoſing God, in his Providence, to puniſh the inſult done to his laws and religion.

One reaſon is given for this practice, that carries a face of concern for religion, but is ſufficiently abſurd, and ſelfiſh in the application. "Slaves cannot keep the ſabbath as Chriſtians; and if not employed for their maſters, will labour for themſelves." Now the trifling

trifling Sundays works, in their own grounds, which an injudicious cuſtom has permitted, and their ſcanty allowance of food has made neceſſary, is done in ſuch manner and circumſtances, as makes it more an amuſement than a labour; nor can it be compared with toiling in their maſter's field under the whip of an overſeer. But I can recollect a particular plantation, where the manager, ſome years ago, with a good intention, made the ſlaves exert themſelves on Sundays, as much in their own ground, as in their maſter's fields, throughout the week; and the conſequence was, that from this inceſſant fatigue, the plantation required a yearly ſupply of ſlaves, above a tenth part of the whole number maintained. Since they have been left to their own inclinations on Sundays, they have been moſt remarkably healthy; nor, I believe, had or needed a recruit theſe laſt ſixteen years. The plantation is particularly well ſupplied with proviſions; and the ſlaves have been treated with peculiar humanity and method.

But if ſlaves do not hallow the ſabbath in a rational manner, cannot their maſters and overſeers, by their own behaviour, ſanctify it. And, ſurely to overlook what you cannot prevent in another, differs widely from the commanding of him to commit a crime, of which you mean to reap the advantage. That ſlaves

cannot rationally keep the ſabbath is matter of ſerious concern. I pray God we may not all be made accountable for it. Still allow this argument what weight you pleaſe; God is the God of the bodies as well as of the ſouls of his creatures, and he wills and attends equally to the welfare of both; and the ſabbath is intended to refreſh the one, and improve the other. Oxen and horſes cannot keep a Chriſtian ſabbath; yet, their Creator reſpects their eaſe, and, among other purpoſes, appointeth the ſabbath expreſsly to favour it. And, ſurely, God doth not leſs regard the bodily ſenſations of human wretches, becauſe in his Providence, for hidden yet certainly wiſe purpoſes, he hath hitherto ſuffered them to be immediately ſubjected to the caprice, the avarice, the cruelty of their fellows, though endued with keener feelings than the brutes, and greater ſenſibility of their claims. Farther, God accepts favourably what ſervice and thanks his creatures are able to pay him; and the ſimple rude way in which negroes, in their Sunday's amuſements, expreſs their ſatisfaction in his diſpenſations, will not be rejected, but be received with approbation and condeſcenſion to their weakneſs.

When we have made every allowance that charity or conſideration can ſuggeſt, no man acquainted with the uſual progreſs of human affairs, and the conſtant tendency of cuſtom, but

but muſt ſee, in this unhallowed, hired, Sunday's labour, the haſtening abolition of reſpect to that day, and of extraordinary hire for working on it. Poverty is craving; avarice inſatiable; luxury boundleſs. And were Sunday once melted down into the week, men would try what more could be cut off from the darkneſs, and ſolitude, and reſt of night.

But without taking into account the inhumanity, the immorality, the imprudence, the irreligion of the practice; what impudence, reſpecting ſociety, doth it imply, when thus a private man ſets his ſelfiſh opinion up againſt the laws of his country, and dares to inſult them publickly, by acting in direct oppoſition to an expreſs ſtatute? How pregnant in ill conſequences muſt the example be, in a community where cuſtom has reduced almoſt the whole of an eſtabliſhed religion to bodily reſt on the ſabbath? Piety, ſoon, will not have a ſingle thread of communication by which to lay hold on our practice. How neceſſary, therefore, to fix a mark on ſuch profane conduct, before cuſtom has ſtamped a faſhion on it, and ſanctified it? And often, for what is humanity, religion and law thus wounded? To anſwer the demands of extravagance, to fill the bags of avarice, to ſupply the funds of luxury. Slavery, in its mildeſt ſhape, has

ſomething

ſomething dangerous and threatning to virtue; but when the very marrow and blood of our fellow creatures are exhauſted in the cruel ſervice of avarice or ſenſuality, the equal Father of all muſt call in ſome dreadful vengeance to puniſh the abuſe.

I mean not ſo much to reflect on individuals, who may already be guilty of this unfeeling, imprudent practice, as to exalt to its proper motives of religion, benevolence, and obedience to your country's laws, that abhorrence which hath been entertained againſt an action that is an outrage to common ſenſe, and common opinion; and which, we are taught in ſcripture, never fails to draw down God's wrath on the people who permit it to be done with impunity among them. It is an offence, which, if not checked in its progreſs, may renew thoſe judgments that for our ſins were lately poured out on us; under which we now, and long muſt continue to ſmart; without provoking farther God's vengeance, or obliging him to ſend new or extraordinary puniſhments to chaſtize or reclaim us *. Could I keep you from the contagion of example, I ſhould rejoice. Whoever has thus ſinned

* Since this period this colony has been greatly reduced by fire, floods, war, capture by the enemy, and ſuch unfavourable ſeaſons, as had hardly happened before in the memory of man.

againſt

againſt God, and his country, ſhall have my prayers, that he may be inſpired with a right way of thinking. Of this be aſſured, that ſuch an extraordinary mode of induſtry is not the path in which God's bleſſings are to be met with. And they who uſe it have reaſon to fear, leſt a diſtreſsful turn in their affairs make this day of liberty and reſt, which they want to cut off from ſociety, the only day in which they dare to enjoy their freedom. †

But if God did not, as certainly he doth, mix therewith a ſecret canker, to eat up the ſubſtance of the offender, yet the unfeeling, hurrying mode of thus working ſlaves, would, by waſting their ſtrength and health, be of itſelf ſufficient puniſhment. And, ſuppoſing the obſervation of the ſabbath to depend wholly for its ſanction on revelation, and the breach of it to be followed by no natural loſs, which is far from the truth; yet, if you be diligent and obedient to the law, for God's ſake, he can, in his Providence, and will, in a thouſand ways, make up any imaginary ſacrifice of time and profit to a truſt in his word, and will proceed in an inconceivable manner to bleſs and proſper you.

† It is certain, that he who began this cuſtom within twelve months durſt not on any other day ſhew his face for fear of his creditors.

I ſhall

I ſhall conclude with an obſervation drawn from mechanics. Though a man of ordinary ſtrength can raiſe, at a ſingle effort, a much greater weight, yet the moſt advantageous exertion of it is within thirty pounds weight; and he, who works diligently eight hours a day, will do more work in a week, than he who drawls out in languid exertions fourteen hours.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Advancement of Slaves muſt accompany their religious Inſtruction.

I SHALL conſider the advantage of promoting ſlaves in ſocial life, as proved beyond a poſſibility of contradiction; but, as my particular aim is to get religion extended to them, I muſt ſhew that there is a connection between ſocial privileges and religious inſtruction; and that the making of a progreſs in either requires them to go hand in hand, and influence each other. That men were intended both for ſociety and religion, and that theſe two were meant to ſupport each other, is a concluſion to be drawn from every circumſtance that reſpects our powers and conſtitution. The helpleſs ſtate of infancy, the variety and inequality of our faculties, all attach us to a particular community, fit us for our various ſtations in it, and give it an indiſſoluble claim to our ſervice and aſſiſtance. And religion brings conſcience in to the aid of ſocial regulations, and fits the man for acting his part in his proper ſtation.

Religion has a two-fold purpoſe: man's ultimate fate as an individual, and his conduct as a member

a member of ſociety. Man, in order to become a good member of ſociety, muſt be inſpired with religious principles; that he may not counteract the common views, out of ſecret fraud, malice, or ſelfiſhneſs, but be carried on to every generous exertion by which the public happineſs can be effected. Religion, then, muſt enter into every plan that has the general good or profit in view. As far, therefore, as we reſpect the proſperity of our country, we muſt wiſh to extend the influence of religion to all thoſe who are comprehended within her laws. But, as Chriſtians, we have ſtill a ſtronger principle of action to excite us to exert ourſelves in enlarging the empire of religion by every benevolent method within our power. Religion determines the future lot of the individual, and the grand principle of benevolence that runs through it, makes his happineſs depend on his doing all the good in his power here to his brethren around him. But the inſtruction of our negroe ſlaves is an act of goodneſs of the higheſt and moſt extenſive nature: and the circumſtances of our having originally inſlaved them, of their living intirely for, and depending on us, and too frequently being oppreſſed and cruelly treated by individuals among us, gives them the ſtrongeſt claim for receiving it at our hands. The privileges of Chriſtianity are of a diffuſive nature, and have this condition among others annexed,

that

that we ſhall communicate them; freely we have received, freely we muſt give. And, in a caſe where none within our reach are to be excepted from ſharing in the benefit, how highly incumbent is it on us to exalt to reaſon and religion thoſe whom our avarice has depreſſed, even to brutality.

But, becauſe, in the demand of duty we are often deſirous of compounding matters, and in the preſent caſe, probably, may imagine that the higheſt purpoſes of religion may be gained without ſuch an alteration in the condition of ſlaves, as while it reſts on ſpeculative arguments, may be thought ſomewhat dangerous; it will be neceſſary to ſhew, that, as the oppreſſed ſituation of negroe ſlaves prevents the community from reaping many important advantages from them, ſo it incapacitates them from making, in any conſiderable degree, a progreſs in religious knowledge. To make a man capable of religion, we muſt endow him with the rights and privileges of a man; we muſt teach him to feel his weight in ſociety, and ſet a value on himſelf, as a member of the community, before we can attempt to perſuade him to lay in his claim to heaven. To ſhew the reader, therefore, the neceſſity of advancing the ſlave, in the ſcale of ſocial life, before we offer him a participation of our religion, I ſhall relate the little efficacy of ſuch attempts as have been made to communicate

cate religious knowledge to him in his hitherto debaſed ſtate. And if ſuch a communication be, as I have affirmed, not only a valuable but an indiſpenſable object to ſociety, I ſhall, in doing this, eſtabliſh the neceſſity of improving his condition in ſocial life.

SECT. I.

Examples of the Difficulty found in inſtructing Slaves in their preſent State.

I AM ſorry to be obliged to remark how little, till within theſe very few years, has been attempted or propoſed on this head. For though the race of authors and projectors equal the leaves of the trees as much in their numbers, as they reſemble them in the ſhortneſs of their exiſtence; yet, unleſs we take into account a few unconnected attempts, a few general ſtrictures, and ſome unmeaning declamations, our ſlaves had hardly found a protector worthy of the appellation, till the publication of the late Hiſtory of Jamaica; and the vindication they have found in it, as we ſhall have occaſion to remark, is on ſuch humiliating terms, as will, I fear, do them little good. Still the nature and iſſue of theſe attempts to inſtruct and ſerve them in their preſent oppreſſed ſtate, will be ſufficient to mark that improbability of ſucceſs which we have affirmed.

Robertſon,

Robertſon, a miniſter in Nevis, about fifty years ago, wrote profeſſedly on the converſion of ſlaves in our colonies, and ſeems to have been willing to have laboured honeſtly in it himſelf. But it is to be remarked of him, that he takes no notice of the intire want of law to ſecure to them proper treatment, nor ſo much as hints that this want is of any diſadvantage to them. And, in reſpect of their converſion, he plainly ſhews that nothing conſiderable can be done in it, unleſs government interpoſe in earneſt to carry it on. But before government can meddle with ſlaves, it muſt take them firſt within the boſom of ſociety, advance their condition, protect in them the claims of human nature, and make them objects of police.

He propoſes that government ſhould keep up a number of miſſionaries among the colonies, by rotation, whoſe whole employment ſhould be to inſtruct the ſlaves, as faſt as they acquired the language, or grew up to be capable of inſtruction. Their only reward, he thinks, ſhould be a preſent maintenance, and a promiſe of being provided for at home, when the time of their miſſion was expired. In this plan, the reader will immediately obſerve, that the miſſionary will require ſome time to gain a facility in teaching, and that, if he returns home after a few years, he muſt reſign to others his ſtation, when

when he is become fit to hold it. The time of his employment will, therefore, require to be regulated in a particular manner to obviate this inconveniency.

He earneſtly endeavours to exculpate the planters for having done ſo little in this affair, from their hurry of buſineſs, their own ignorance, their inability in point of fortune. He farther attempts to prove, that negroes, in general, are ill adapted for inſtruction, by reaſon of their ſulkineſs, ſtupidity, prejudices; in many an incapacity of making any tolerable progreſs in the language; and, laſtly the univerſal careleſſneſs that prevails among them about every thing that does not ſtrike their ſenſes.

In ſhort, from his obſervations, a man would be apt to conclude, that he was of opinion that the manufacture of ſugar, and the practice of religion, were things incompatible; and that before we began to deliberate about the converſion of ſlaves, the previous queſtion had need to be diſcuſſed, whether we ſhould maintain this manufacture, or apply ourſelves to promote the growth of Chriſtianity. But whatever may be the intrinſic merit of his plan, it has been too long before the public unnoticed, for us to expect much from it at this day.

A planter

A planter of ———, a man of education, and of a religious turn of mind, about twenty-four years ago attempted the converſion of his own ſlaves. He himſelf became their catechiſt and preacher. He increaſed their allowance of food, clothed them decently, treated them with humanity, tried to reaſon rather than whip them out of their faults, and granted them many indulgencies in the hours and degrees of their labour. He purſued his plan during a good many years, and, as was ſaid, at firſt with ſome degree of ſucceſs: but ſome time before his death, according to the author's information, he gave up the deſign, in deſpair of effecting any thing conſiderable by it. The cauſes of his ill ſucceſs, that have been aſſigned, were a relaxation of diſcipline reſpecting their obedience and labour, for which they were not ripe; and his inſiſting on too accurate an obſervation of the ſabbath, in the manner of the Jews, while, they had no mental employment to ſubſtitute on it for their uſual private labour, and ſocial amuſements. In ſhort, the indulgencies that ſhould have been the *reward* of improvement and good behaviour, were made to *precede* them, and there was nothing left to allure them, or encourage them in the work. But, ſince his death, ſeveral of his people have joined themſelves to the Moravians, who have a miſſion in the colony.

A con-

A conſiderable number of years ago, the abſent owner of a plantation ſent out poſitive ſtanding inſtructions to his manager, to have his ſlaves carefully inſtructed in the Chriſtian religion, and baptized. He accompanied this order with directions to treat them in every reſpect with conſiderate humanity, and to do for them whatever was poſſible to make their ſtate eaſy, and their lives happy. The miniſter of the pariſh accordingly was applied to, and a recompence for his trouble was agreed on. Here then was a proſpect of a fair trial of what could poſſibly be effected among ſlaves in their preſent ſtate; but the manager's injudicious choice of an inſtructor blaſted every reaſonable expectation. The miniſter was not even oſtenſibly decent, and never affected to be guided by principles of duty that he did not feel. He ſaw nothing in the propoſal but an increaſe of income to himſelf, and was determined to intitle himſelf to it in the eaſieſt manner poſſible. The following was his method:

He came to the plantation on a Sunday afternoon, and deſired the manager to collect eight or ten ſlaves to be baptized. They were brought before him. He began to repeat the office of baptiſm. When he had read as far as that part of the ſervice where he was to ſprinkle them with water, if their former name pleaſed him he baptiſed them by it; but if he thought

it

it not fit to call a Chriſtian by, as was his opinion of Quamina, Bungee, and the like, he gave them the firſt Chriſtian name which occurred to his memory. This name the bearer, perhaps, could not repeat, and ſcarcely ever remembered afterwards; ſo that he continued to be diſtinguiſhed among his fellows by his old heathen name.

The miniſter, being once aſked, what end he propoſed in performing the ceremony in this ſuperficial manner? he frankly replied, "He "was paid for doing it; it did the creatures "no harm; and when they died, he ſhould "be paid for burying them." Accordingly the manager compounded the matter with him, and gave him yearly a caſk of rum worth about £ 8 ſterling, in lieu of ſurplus fees due for burying them. He had alſo a ſalary of £ 20 for viſiting and praying with the ſick, which, without being earned, he punctually received. For the baptiſms, he was paid a certain ſum.

Some of the baptized would mutter, and ſay, they deſired not the parſon to throw water in their face; which is all that they knew of the matter, and therefore were loth to ſuffer themſelves to be ſo dealt with. In ſhort, if merely the making of them parties to a rite that they underſtand not, and in which they take no active or rational ſhare, doth initiate them into Chriſt's church,

church, then are they right good Chriſtians. But if ſome ſhare of knowledge, if ſome degree of aſſent be neceſſary to give the miniſter's conning over the office of baptiſm before them, ſome religious effect among them, theſe ſlaves can pretend to little Chriſtianity. For here the plea of infant baptiſm cannot be admitted, becauſe neither non-age nor after-inſtruction can be pretended. In this manner was unſuſpecting piety impoſed on, and ſuch formerly were the miniſters recommended for the colonies.

SECT. II.

The Obſtacles that the Moravian Miſſions have to ſtruggle with.

THE Moravians ſhew a remarkable and laudable degree of aſſiduity in making converts; and, taking their difficulties into account, they have had, on the whole, no inconſiderable ſucceſs. Their diſciples in Antigua are about two thouſand in number; the fruits of twenty years labour. Several planters encourage their endeavours among their people. But ſome years ago they received a rude ſhock from an attempt of a particular maſter to intrude on them Mr. Lindſay's tenets, which required their own firmneſs, and the affection of their converts to defeat. There are uſually three miſſionaries. They have introduced decency and ſobriety among

among their people, and no mean degree of religious knowledge. They have infant miſſions in Barbadoes, St. Chriſtopher's and Jamaica. †

They have made the greateſt progreſs in the Daniſh colonies. In St. Croix they have fixed a biſhop, with ſeveral miniſters and catechiſts under him. They have chapels in the different quarters of the iſland. Many gentlemen have private chapels for their uſe, and encourage them in their labours. Government countenances them; but the Daniſh clergymen in the iſland do not favour or aſſiſt them.

Every evening, except on Saturday, they have diſtinct meetings, by turns, for their baptized and catechumens. Their hour of general worſhip is on Sunday evening; the ſlaves being obliged to labour on that day for their ſubſiſtence. The converts are taught to uſe private devotions. When they go to, and leave off work, they ſing in concert a few hymns drawn up in the common language. Singing makes a conſiderable part of their common worſhip.

The moſt ſenſible, of both ſexes, are raiſed to the dignity of elders or helpers, to ſuperintend each

† Every thing here ſaid concerning the ſucceſs of the Moravians, and the good effects of it upon the ſlaves in Antigua, has been lately confirmed to me by a gentleman who has ſpent many years in that iſland. But he adds, that the number of negroe converts, inſtead of 2000, is upward of 6000.

each the behaviour of their ſex, and to forward the work of inſtruction. When a brother commits a fault, he is mildly reproved in private, or if it be of a public nature, before the congregation: if he obſtinately perſiſts in the fault, he is, for a time, deprived of the euchariſt, or ſeparated from the congregation. This diſcipline ſeldom fails to produce repentance, on which he is readily re-admitted to the privileges of the ſociety.

In bringing them on in religious knowledge, they begin by drawing their attention particularly to the ſufferings and crucifixion of our Saviour. When this is found to have made an impreſſion on their minds, and filled their hearts with grateful ſentiments, they then make them connect it with repentance and a good life. Submiſſion to their maſters, and full obedience to their commands, even to working in the plantation, when ſo ordered, on Sundays, are ſtrongly inforced; or rather, they impreſs on them the neceſſity of ſubmitting to thoſe irregularities which, in their ſtate of ſubjection, they cannot avoid, that their maſters may have no complaint againſt them, while labouring to gain the great point of general improvement. Their greateſt trouble ariſes from the libidinous behaviour of overſeers among the female diſciples, which, however, ſome maſters check as much as lies in their power.

The

The great ſecret of the miſſionary's management, beſides ſoliciting the grateful attention of their hearers to our Saviour's ſufferings, is to contract an intimacy with them, to enter into their little intereſts, to hear patiently their doubts and complaints, to condeſcend to their weakneſs and ignorance, to lead them on ſlowly and gently, to exhort them affectionately, to avoid carefully magiſterial threatenings and commands.

The conſequences of this method are obſerved to be a conſiderable degree of religious knowledge, an orderly behaviour, a neatneſs in their perſons and clothing, a ſobriety in their carriage, a ſenſibility in their manner, a diligence and faithfulneſs in their ſtations, induſtry and method in their own little matters, an humility and piety in their converſation, an univerſal unimpeached honeſty in their conduct.

The brethren in Europe are at the expence of the miſſionary's journeys, and contribute to their maintenance. They have a ſmall plantation in one of the Daniſh iſlands, from which they draw part of their ſupport. Some of the miſſionaries, at their leiſure hours, apply to mechanic employments. The reſt of their ſimple maintenance ariſes from trifling voluntary collections among their diſciples. Some of them are men of learning, others ſimple well-meaning men.

Their

Their biſhop is a man of plain good ſenſe and diſcretion.

This account of the Moravians appears, at firſt ſight, to contradict my poſition, that the prreſent debaſed ſtate of ſlaves favours not religious improvem ent. The circumſtances in their favour are, that they are ſeen by their ſcholars only as inſtructors or comforters; that they try to loſe ſight of ſlavery and its conſequences, and ſhew their converts to themſelves only in the light of a religious ſociety; that, as far as the ſimplicity of their rites will permit, they draw imagination to their aſſiſtance, and paint religion almoſt in ſenſible colours.

But it may be obſerved, that the authority of the maſter which they muſt inforce, and the law of God, which they profeſs to teach, muſt often draw the heſitating ſlave different ways, and fill his mind with doubt, which of the two is to be obeyed. God ſets apart the ſabbath to recruit the body for labour, and improve the mind for futurity; the maſter, having ſeized for himſelf the work of the week, obliges the ſlave to toil on that day for his own maintenance; nay, not unfrequently for his (the maſter's) avarice. Doubtleſs, however it may fare with the profane maſter, the fate of the ſlave himſelf is in the beſt hands; but he can acquire only an inferior kind of religion, and he

he muſt hold even that at the caprice of one who, in himſelf, perhaps has no religion. A mitigation therefore of their ſlavery, and a communication of ſome ſocial privileges, are ſtill a neceſſary foundation for any eminent degree of religious improvement.

SECT. III.

Inefficacy of the Author's private Attempts to inſtruct Slaves.

Though ſome individuals may treat their ſlaves with humanity and diſcretion, yet we can give very few inſtances of any attention ſhewn to their *moral improvement*, or of any pains taken to enable them to become partakers of the goſpel promiſes. Religion is not deemed neceſſary to qualify a ſlave to anſwer any purpoſe of ſervitude; and while we wiſh them to be diligent and faithful, we never think of placing a monitor within their breaſts, nor of directing them to look up to God, as the obſerver or rewarder of integrity. Indeed, in the relation of maſter and ſlave, there is ſo little of what is reciprocal in the duty on one ſide and advantage on the other, that it is hardly poſſible to infuſe any other principle than fear into the mind of a ſlave, or to make him conſider himſelf in any other light than that of an unwilling inſtument of his maſter's tyranny and grandeur: a condition that leaves

leaves him at liberty to ſeize every opportunity of making his ſervice of as little uſe as he can to his maſter, and of making up for the pinching ill treatment that he receives from him, by pilfering and purloining whatever lies open to him.

When the author firſt ſettled in the Weſt-Indies, he freely and openly blamed the careleſſneſs of the inhabitants in a matter of this importance, and he reſolved within himſelf to ſhew how much might be done by one who was in earneſt. His ſlaves were well clothed and plentifully fed; their employment, which was only the common work of a private family, was barely ſufficient for the exerciſe neceſſary to preſerve their health. There was more than a ſufficient number of them. In ſhort, they were plump, healthy, and in ſpirits. In the evening they were called in, and made to repeat the creed, the Lord's prayer, and a few other prayers that were reckoned beſt adapted to them. Their duty was explained to them in terms let down, as much as poſſible, to their apprehenſion. Their fears, their hopes, their gratitude, were all made to intereſt themſelves in the ſubject. They were not puniſhed for one fault in ten that they committed, and never with ſeverity. They were carefully attended when ſick. Nothing was at any time required of them but what was neceſſary, and much within their ability. But the treatment may be

be collected from this circumſtance; that in eighteen years, though they had been gradually increaſing by births and purchaſe from ten to twenty in number, not one had died in his family, except infants during the period of nurſing. In other reſpects he cannot boaſt greatly of his ſucceſs.

The firſt ſlave he poſſeſſed was a French negroe boy, who could tell his beads, and repeat his Pater-noſter. He was placed out in town with a barber: there he formed ſuch acquaintances, and acquired ſuch habits of idleneſs, as made him a moſt irreclaimable run-a-way; and forced his maſter to diſpoſe of him at a loſs of twenty-four pounds ſterling. He hired a ſenſible, induſtrious, elderly negroe, who ſeemed well pleaſed with his ſituation, till he found that he was obliged to attend in the evening at prayers. He plainly ſaid, he did not love ſuch things, and that he, a negroe, had nothing to do with the prayers of white people; and, in a ſhort time, he left his place without aſſigning any other reaſon.

He has been obliged to ſend three negroes off the iſland for theft and running away; that he might not be under the neceſſity of puniſhing with ſeverity. One of them, a ſenſible accompliſhed negreſs, was returned on his hands from the Daniſh iſland of St. Croix, for being ſuch

a thief, that no body would venture to take her into their family. Her own account was different. She had been returned by him, to whom ſhe had been ſent down, becauſe his favourite Sultana had become jealous of her attractions. To the accuſations of theft, ſhe replied, that whatever ſhe might formerly have done in her maſter's family, ſhe knew better than to ſteal in an iſland, where, for taking the leaſt trifle, ſhe might, without noiſe, have been taken up, and executed immediately. She concluded, that her being ſent back alive was a demonſtration of her not having been guilty of theft during her exile. He was obliged to affect a ſatisfaction in her defence. And, though by no means faultleſs, yet, either from partial reformation, (for ſhe was very capable of reaſoning) or an unwillingneſs to make another trip from her native country, ſhe continued to behave more carefully and attentively in the family; and at laſt became ſo induſtrious as to be able to buy out her own, and a daughter's freedom, that ſhe had by a free-man. But he poſſeſſed not a ſingle ſlave on whom he could place dependence. And, had it not been for a white woman, whoſe employment was to watch them, and whoſe care he uſed, as others do correction, to keep them from diſhoneſty, he would have been at a loſs how to have carried on houſe-keeping, without a degree of ſeve-

rity

rity abhorrent to his temper. Now, while they continued abandoned, irreclaimable, and inſenſible of good treatment, they could be very little diſpoſed to become Chriſtians.

From this unfavourable view of his ſlaves, it muſt not be concluded, that all are abſolutely worthleſs. You often meet with a ſlave attached to his maſter's intereſt, and in moſt reſpects truſt-worthy. The author knows ſome that would not loſe, on compariſon, with the moſt circumſpect and faithful ſervants in Britain. Slaves, indeed, are frequently attached to the perſons of their maſters, and will riſk their lives readily for them, who yet make very free with their property. To ſpeak generally, thoſe maſters are beſt ſerved, who feed and clothe their ſlaves well, who are themſelves methodical in their buſineſs, and never take notice of a fault in them unleſs they mean to correct them ſmartly for it. *They* are *ill* ſerved, who are careleſs in their manner, indifferent how they are treated, averſe to or irregular in their method of chaſtiſement. And can any behaviour different from this be expected in creatures, whoſe only motive of action is preſent feeling, who have no reputation to ſupport, no laſting intereſt to care for?

The author is ſenſible that his want of ſucceſs was, in a certain degree, owing to a want

of ſtrictneſs in the method of treating his ſlaves, adapted to their preſent debaſed ſtate. And this aroſe equally from his want of reſolution to perſevere in the diſagreeable work, and from the ſituation of his family, a private one not methodically and conſtantly employed in particular buſineſs. This circumſtance rendered it incapable of being regulated with the accuracy of a plantation, where every hour has its employment, and every piece of work its overſeer. Nor are any families among us ſo well regulated as thoſe connected with plantations, where method in correction and work makes ſome amends for the want of principle in our manner of managing ſlaves. This, at firſt view, may appear harſh to the humane and pious; but it is not, therefore, the leſs a true picture of human nature; nor to thoſe who are acquainted with the neceſſity and effects of diſcipline in our army and navy, will it reflect any particular diſgrace on the natural bias or capacity of Africans. Human nature, whereever found in the ſame debaſed ſtate, would ſhew itſelf in the ſame worthleſs manner. Nor is it an argument for ſtraitening, but for relaxing, and at laſt entirely breaking, the chain of ſlavery.

Maſter and ſlave are in every reſpect oppoſite terms; the perſons to whom they are applied, are natural enemies to each other. Sla-

very,

very, in the manner and degree that it exiſts in our colonies, could never have been intended for the ſocial ſtate; for it ſuppoſes tyranny on one ſide, treachery and cunning on the other. Nor is it neceſſary to diſcuſs which gives firſt occaſion to the other. But as ſlavery has overrun ſo large a portion of ſociety, the beſt thing now to be done, is to preſs its neceſſary ſtrictneſs of diſcipline into the ſervice of freedom. In conformity to this reaſoning, I affirm, that, If ever the reformation, of which we intend to treat, takes place, it muſt begin in *a plantation*, where forms, that are the firſt traces, the outlines of rationality can be accurately aſcertained, and conſtantly enforced, by perſevering method and diſcipline. The mild and argumentative Solon could regulate the ſprightly, ſenſible Athenians; but the rough, unfeeling Ruſſians required a Draco, in their Peter the Great, to wreſt their brutality from them. In our caſe, the block muſt, in ſome meaſure be chipt in the rude manner of this laſt, before the light touches of the poliſher can take effect.*

The

* In this, and every other place, where a ſtreſs is laid on forms and diſcipline, the reader is deſired to diſtinguiſh between ſtrictneſs and cruelty. What is here ſuggeſted, is pointed at the maſter, more than the ſlave, and intends nothing violent or abrupt. If the maſter be exact, and careful in his own duty, he will have little reaſon to complain of the ſlave. Exactneſs of method prevents faults, and cuts off the neceſſity of puniſhment. It is the ignorant, the immethodical, the negligent,

The author cannot, indeed, ſatisfy himſelf with what he has done, and continues to do, in ſpite of diſappointment. The thing when conſidered by itſelf, appears ſo plauſible, and mild treatment makes in his imagination, ſo amiable a part of it, that he is ready to hope, he has only miſſed the right road, and may be more ſucceſsful, if he could ſtrike out a new plan. Again, when it is conſidered, how much the negroes are immerſed in ſenſe, how their intellectual powers are wholly employed in the ſervice of the body, and that, reſpecting them, we have acceſs to the firſt only by methods that make impreſſion on the other; when he revolves the difficulty of managing, by argument alone, a few ſlaves living and having their connections among hundreds of their equals, who are reſtrained only by the whip, every hope of governing them, without a certain degree of diſcipline, ſubſides; he is reduced to barely wiſhing, and praying, that things were otherwiſe than he has found them, after his beſt endeavours.

The example and converſation of our equals, will ever have greater influence on our behaviour,

negligent, the gadding manager, or overſeer, who muſt make up for all his own defects by ſtripes, and cruel uſage to thoſe who are under him. In Chap. I. Sect. 7, we gave an inſtance of great ſtrictneſs of diſcipline, without the uſual proportion of puniſhment. Four times out of five the ſlave is puniſhed for the overſeer's fault.

viour, than the precepts or example of thoſe who are ſuppoſed to be under other laws, and to have their lives regulated by rules different from thoſe that we think are appointed for us. And it may be preſumed, that the eaſy treatment which made part of the author's ſcheme, becauſe moſt agreeable to his diſpoſition, produced in minds not capable of diſtinguiſhing lenity from want of power, that careleſſneſs to pleaſe, and proneneſs to ill behaviour, which marked his ſmall number of ſlaves.

This was the caſe of the author's ſlaves, and the reaſoning about them, as matters ſtood in the year 1771. Since the dreadful hurricane of 1772, which ſwept away all their little ſtock, there has been ſome change for the better in their general conduct. They have taken a turn to induſtry in their own little concerns, which has given them a reliſh for property (a turn that ſhould always be encouraged) and this has had an effect on their behaviour. In conſequence of this, the greateſt part of them have been admitted to baptiſm, and were not the maſter too frequently obliged to interpoſe in matters of domeſtic concern, to check that ſpirit of careleſſneſs and oppoſition, which naturally riſes againſt the views of authority, the catechiſt and teacher might have appeared to have made ſome conſiderable progreſs among them. Though the relaxed diſcipline of the family made

made them ſtill rather careleſs of pleaſing, yet they kept more at home, and behaved more honeſtly; and while ſome ſeemed attached through principle, all had become more decent and orderly than in the former period.

But though they were ſlaves only in name, except in the not being at liberty to change the place of their abode at pleaſure, and though become more manageable than before, yet the reluctance that run through and affected the ſervice of the beſt, with only one exception; the biaſs they had to the manners and company of the ſlaves around them; the neceſſity of following them up in every ſtep of duty impoſed on them, and of keeping the fear of puniſhment ſuſpended over them; in ſhort, the apparent uneaſineſs on one ſide, and the indiſpenſable miſtruſt on the other, plainly proved that they had no ſolid enjoyment of themſelves. And indeed it was the ſtrong feeling he had of theſe difficulties in the management of his ſlaves, which principally contributed to make the ſituation of their maſter moſt irkſome to him, and to render a ſtate of affluence and eaſe, (in a ſettlement otherwiſe as agreeable as imagination can well paint) ſo diſguſtful, as induced him with eagerneſs to embrace the firſt opportunity that a generous friendſhip offered, of a retreat in a country, in which, though leſs favourable to his health, and the

views

views of his family, he could indulge the feelings of benevolence without regret.

SECT. IV.

Inefficacy of the Author's Public Attempts to inſtruct Slaves.

ON his firſt ſettlement as a miniſter in the Weſt-Indies, he made alſo ſome *public* attempts to inſtruct ſlaves. He began to draw up ſome eaſy, plain diſcourſes for their inſtruction. He invited them to attend on Sundays, at particular hours. He appointed hours at home, to inſtruct ſuch ſenſible ſlaves as would of themſelves attend. He repeatedly exhorted their maſters to encourage ſuch in their attendance. He recommended the French cuſtom, of beginning and ending work by prayer. But inconceivable is the liſtleſſneſs with which he was heard, and bitter was the cenſure heaped on him in return. It was quickly ſuggeſted, and generally believed, that he wanted to interrupt the work of ſlaves, to give them time, forſooth, to ſay their prayers; that he aimed at the making of them Chriſtians, to render them incapable of being good ſlaves. In one word, he ſtood, in opinion, a rebel convict againſt the intereſt and majeſty of planterſhip. And as the Jews ſay, that in every puniſhment, with which they have been proved, ſince the bondage of Egypt, there has been an ounce of the golden calf of Horeb; ſo may he ſay, that in

every inſtance of prejudice (and they have not been a few) with which, till within a year or two of his departure from the country, he has been exerciſed, there has been an ounce of his fruitleſs attempts to improve the minds of ſlaves.

No maſter would uſe any influence with his ſlaves, to make them attend at the appointed hours. Even ſome, who approved of the plan, or at leaſt durſt not, for ſhame, object to it, and who would have been offended with the man that ſhould have inſinuated their diſregard to religion, did not think themſelves obliged to co-operate, or encourage their ſlaves to attend on inſtruction. Nor did this backwardneſs proceed from a dread of the ill conſequences of improvement, but from an indolence in ſuch matters, that cannot be explained to one unacquainted with the country.

In the bidding prayer, he had inſerted a petition for the converſion of ſlaves. It was deemed ſo diſagreeable a memento, that ſeveral white people, on account of it, left off attending divine ſervice. He was obliged to omit the prayer entirely, to try and bring them back. In ſhort, neither were the ſlaves, at that time, deſirous of being taught, nor were their maſters inclined to encourage them. But as this refers to a period about eighteen years ago, which, in change of inhabitants, is there equal to a generation,

neration, there is ground to hope that the ancient prejudices againſt the converſion of the negroes may, ſince that æra, in ſome iſlands and in ſome plantations, be a good deal abated.

SECT. V.

The Manner ſuggeſted, in which private Attempts on large Plantations, to improve Slaves, may probably ſucceed.

LITTLE, we ſee, can be ſaid of the endeavours of individuals, within the author's knowledge, to improve their ſlaves. Some years ago he ſcarce knew a man on the ſpot, who had ſeriouſly attended to their inſtruction, or who believed that intereſt, duty, or reputation, obliged him to attempt it. Nay, though the more moderate and ſenſible people allow that the inſtruction of ſlaves, if their preſent condition permitted it, and it could be brought about, would be a good thing, yet it is not to be concealed, that ſome have ſtrong objections againſt every meaſure that has their benefit in view, or that conſiders them in any other light than inſtruments of labour. An owner will, indeed, ſometimes have a favourite ſlave baptized; but I am not ſenſible of any care having been taken, either before or after, with one in ten, who are indulged with the rite, to ſee that they be inſtructed.

I was

I was once requeſted to baptize a negreſs, remarkable for her faithfulneſs and attachment to her owner's intereſt. On examination, I found her groſsly ignorant, and unuſually inattentive. In the eaſieſt manner in my power I attempted to inſtruct her, and as ſhe lived in the neighbourhood, bid her come frequently to me. I ſpoke alſo to her owners, mentioned her ignorance, and expreſſed my readineſs to inſtruct her. She never attended, was carried into another pariſh, and there baptized, I had almoſt ſaid, without ceremony. Baptiſm is ſuppoſed to free a ſlave from the power of the negroe conjurer, and its being permitted, is conſidered, in the maſter, as the conferring of a favour that is complete, when the rite is performed. The lot of ſlaves, reſpecting religion, is moſt favourable, when they happen to be preſented young to a growing up daughter of the family, or to be the property of induſtrious people, juſt above the loweſt rank. In theſe caſes, care is ſometimes taken to fit them for baptiſm, and ſome turn out tolerably ſober, and ſenſible; but their proportion to the whole can hardly be taken into account.

But if ſlaves in *their preſent ſtate* be capable of any *conſiderable* improvement, it will probably be on large plantations, where they compoſe communities of themſelves, and where the diſcipline neceſſary for humanizing them can be carried on with the greateſt ſtrictneſs and effect.

effect. In this point of view is the following plan propoſed.

In the firſt place, a chaplain muſt be appointed; and a man of conſiderable aſſiduity would find full employment among the uſual numbers, that extenſive plantations contain of ſuch ignorant creatures. If a ſober diſcreet man in orders could be found, who underſtood phyſic enough to enable him to take charge of their ſick, greater encouragement could be given, and one office would promote the other. For both, a ſingle man ſhould be allowed £250 ſterling per annum, the uſe of an horſe and a boy, and board with the manager. No man, acquainted with the country, will conſider this appointment as exceſſive, for a man of a liberal education.

The chaplain ſhould teach the ſlaves ſome ſhort prayers, to be repeated by them in private, when they riſe in the morning, and when they go to ſleep. He ſhould accuſtom them to repeat ſome ſhort inſtructive form reſpecting their ſocial duties, when they begin and leave off their field work. The black overſeers, as in the French colonies, may ſoon be taught to take the lead in their field devotions.

A chapel ſhould be built for the performance of divine ſervice on Sunday, for prayers on the days when their allowance of proviſions is diſtributed,

tributed, for celebrating the offices of matrimony and baptiſm, and any other occaſion of meeting together. A burying ground ſhould be ſet apart for the decent interment of the dead, and it ſhould be allotted out according to their families. It would have an excellent effect on them, if only tractable, well-diſpoſed perſons were buried with their families, and every worthleſs fellow buried in a place apart.

The chapel ſhould be built near the hoſpital, that all, who are under cure, may, if able, attend ſervice. The chaplain ſhould be inſtant in inſtructing thoſe in the hoſpital, that his teaching may interefere the leſs with their ordinary work in health. And as a conſiderable proportion, on ſome account or other, will be received into the hoſpital within the year, ſomething valuable may be effected by embracing that opportunity. By applying particularly to bring forward the more ſenſible and teachable ſlaves, he may enable them in time to aſſiſt him in the work, and by little rewards, which he may be allowed to beſtow, he may ſecure their help; but eſpecially, he may give the parents affection a turn to the inſtruction of their children. The great difficulty will be, to let down the language of religion to their preſent capacity: a convincing proof with me, that however ſlavery may be permitted, yet originally Providence never deſigned any rational, or accountable creature for ſuch a depreſſed brutiſh ſtate, as that of African ſlaves

in

in the Britiſh colonies. But if a few were once well-grounded in religious knowledge, they could talk more familiarily and feelingly to their fellows, than the miniſter; and his chief buſineſs, except general inſtruction, would then be to ſuperintend their conduct, and excite them to the work. The young children generally ſhew themſelves four or five times a day in a gang, with ſmall parcels of graſs, picked for the cattle. They may be made to repeat ſome ſhort general precept, on delivering in their bundles, the moſt forward boy taking the lead.

Sundays are uſually ſpent by induſtrious ſlaves, in their own proviſion grounds. To give them time for improvement and devotion on that day, they muſt be allowed at leaſt Saturday afternoon for their own work; taking care to keep them honeſtly employed, that they may not go robbing, or ſtealing, or get into drunken brawls. Few, at firſt, could bear ſuch indulgence, without ſtrict looking after.

As the manager will object to a regulation that curtails the working hours of his people, to induce him to allow the ſlaves this time, he muſt be permitted to make up for the labour reduced in giving up Saturday afternoon to themſelves, by adding gradually to the gang, on a large plantation, about thirty young negroes. If the owner ſhould, from delicacy,

object

object to the buying of ſlaves, perhaps the conſideration of its producing a benefit to the whole, may prevail on him. This would be an expence at firſt, but, by increaſing the vigour and induſtry of the ſlaves, would in time improve his property greatly beyond their firſt coſt. And as the ſlaves might be made to perform their own work, under the direction of the overſeers, their patches of ground would be better cultivated, and give greater increaſe, than when each is left to work as he pleaſeth. This is on the ſuppoſition, that ſuch plantations, are fully ſtocked for the preſent views of the proprietors.

The gang ſhould be marſhalled by families, each diviſion being put under the care of the principal perſon in it, who ſhould be anſwerable for their conduct. At ſtated times they ſhould paſs in review, be examined in reſpect of health, give an account of their clothes, and the ſeveral articles of their little property. Then ſhould follow an inquiry into their religious progreſs, and a diſtribution of rewards among the moſt diligent, either in getting themſelves, or their children and fellows forward. Much would depend on the temper and diſcretion of the miniſter; much on the hearty concurrence of the manager.

A large public thatched room ſhould be built, in which to hold their feaſts and merry-makings;

makings; and the man of the greateſt influence and ſobriety among them, ſhould be choſen by themſelves, and approved of by the manager, to be maſter of the revels, and keep them harmleſs and within bounds. Some ſolemn act of prayer, or thankſgiving, ſhould begin and end every aſſembly.

No offence, except inſolence and diſobedience, ſhould be puniſhed by the manager, till it has been ſubmitted to the deciſion of a jury, choſen from among themſelves. This would accuſtom them to mark the difference between right and wrong, and at leaſt make conſiderate and prudent ſlaves ſhun faults, which they had condemned in their neighbour's practice. All puniſhments ſhould be inflicted with ſolemnity, in preſence of the gang, accompanied with ſome ſhort explanation of the crime, and an exhortation from the chaplain, to abſtain from it. Inſolence and diſobedience are left to be puniſhed at the diſcretion of the manager, till the ſlaves become capable of moral government, becauſe he would not be able to ſupport his authority, if obliged to ſubmit the diſcuſſion of faults committed againſt himſelf, to the deciſion of other perſons.

It is difficult to determine what reformation this example, and the good effects produced by this extraordinary care, might produce in a neighbourhood. But judging from analogy, we muſt

muſt not expect the fruits to be of a very quick growth, or very ſpreading nature. Thus, for inſtance, we know that intereſt pleads equally with humanity, for the kind treatment of ſlaves. Every diſcreet man feelingly acknowledges it; yet how often, in practice, do theſe principles ſeem to be at variance, in ſpite of the moſt convincing example which their union, in men of prudence and ſentiment, can produce? How frequently may intereſt, or rather her accurſed phantom, ſelfiſhneſs, be ſeen dragging a human creature in a chain, naked, ſtarved, and raw with ſtripes, and demanding, with threats, that tale of labour, which cruelty has rendered the wretch incapable of performing?

Now if example be ſo little of a diffuſive nature, in a caſe ſuch as this, in which all conſider themſelves as concerned, what may we expect to happen in religion, which is not deemed the concern of any particular perſon? The liſtleſſneſs in ſuch matters is too univerſal; the deſire of preſent gain too general, for any conſiderable proportion of the inhabitants to fall ſuddenly and eagerly into a ſcheme, that promiſes ſo little immediate profit, and ſeems to be ſo very foreign to their buſineſs, or duty, and ſo far above the capacity of the objects of this improvement. *

Yet

* Among the ancients, not only the fine arts, but ſciences and philoſophy, in particular inſtances, were cultivated by ſlaves. Theſe were therefore immediate objects of religion and

Yet on no account is there reaſon to deſpair. Good ſenſe would induce the imitation of ſome; religion, awakened by conſcience, would exert her influence with others; ſhame would oblige many, vanity more; the natural progreſs of knowledge and reaſon in the human mind, though ſlow to anſwer the wiſhes of ſentiment, would go on gradually to accompliſh the important work. Even among the ſenſible ſlaves, emulation would have great effects. On the whole, the cauſe of humanity and religion would be ſerved. But whatever might be the iſſue with others, were ſuch ſlaves as theſe of whom we treat, advanced in ſocial life gradually, as they ſhewed themſelves capable of improvement, nothing could hinder their maſters from reaping the happieſt fruits from their humanity, piety, and good ſenſe. They would be more healthy,

and morality. But their ſituation differed greatly from that of our African ſlaves. Theſe are ſavages raviſhed from their huts, and their country, to till, like brutes, a ſtrange ſoil, in a ſtrange climate, among people of a ſtrange ſpeech, without rights, without privileges, without enjoyments. The ancient ſlaves were often perſons of condition, deprived of their freedom by the accidents of war; or ſuch as had been liberally brought up in their maſter's family, and looked forward to freedom in his affection or gratitude. Theſe once accuſtomed to reflect, purſued their ſtudies, and ſearched in philoſophy, or religion, for ſupport under the miſeries of their condition. In their caſe, no inſolent pride in the maſter, of ſuppoſing himſelf of an higher race, blocked up the path to their advancement. It is pride with us forms an inſeparable bar to every generous wiſh. Emulation is frozen; expectation is dead; the heavenly ſpark lies ſmothered in anguiſh and neglect, while all around is darkneſs and doubt.

healthy, more vigorous, more diligent, more honeſt; they would riſe in the ſcale of being, poſſeſs more of the conveniencies of life, enjoy more happineſs, and look forward with more confidence into futurity. I have mentioned the neceſſity of making ſocial privileges, to accompany attempts at mental improvement, becauſe I am perſuaded, that little of conſequence can be gained in the laſt, without beſtowing ſomething proportionably conſiderable on the other. But we ſhall leave the diſcuſſion of this point, to make a part of our particular plan of improvement. *

In

* That particular points may be gained among ſlaves, in their preſent ſtate, though we have few examples of *general* improvement, may be concluded from the following narration.

On a plantation in a tobacco colony, lived ſome years ago a manager, a German, a reduced army officer. He formed the ſlaves into a regiment, dividing them into commands, and appointing officers over them. Their motions were performed, and their work was regulated by beat of drum. He planted armed centinels as in a garriſon. Offences were tried as in a court martial, and none were puniſhed till their equals had adjudged them to be guilty. A corporal had deſerted and carried off his arms. The officer received intelligence of him, and as it was the firſt inſtance of deſertion, and the offender had alſo killed one of his companions, it was neceſſary to make a ſtriking example of it. The officer went at the head of an armed party, and ſurrounded the houſe where the corporal lay hid. It was night, and happened to be moon-light. The noiſe ſoon brought the deſerter out, armed with his muſket. The officer, while advancing on him with his muſket preſented, bid him ſurrender, and on no account to preſent his piece, for on the ſmalleſt attempt he would ſhoot him; on the other hand, he aſſured him, on his honour, that he ſhould have a fair trial. The corporal hoped to command more favourable terms in a poſture of defence, but in attempting to level his piece, the

In general we affirm, that the maſter, or legiſlature, that aims at improvement, or deſires to promote good order, muſt keep their people ſtrictly to forms, and make the individuals judges of each other's behaviour. Breaches of morality may, under proper general ſanctions, be left to the unbiaſſed opinions of the people. To direct induſtry, and indifferent habits, to a plan of general utility and obedience, is the object of police. To carry form and method into private life, is the true ſecret to impart firmneſs, both to law and empire.

It was not the *laws* of Lycurgus, which might not be in contemplation once in a man's life, but it was his *cuſtoms*, which met the citizen at every meal, that gave ſtability to Sparta. The decalogue, and the other principles of morality, fill a ſmall ſpace in the laws of Moſes, and reſpect every other nation equally with the Jews; but ablutions, feſtivals, and ſacrifices returned on his people, at every hour; and they were the inſtitutes which have principally ſecured obedience to that conſtitution through a longer period of time, than any other ſyſtem has been able

the officer ſhot him dead. He was tried in the provincial courts for killing the man, and was acquitted. But to ſhew his people, that he did not make one law for them, and another for himſelf, he had the cauſe formally diſcuſſed in his own plantation court, and was unanimouſly abſolved. The effects that would naturally be produced by ſuch a diſcipline, enforced by ſuch an example, muſt, in things to which it is extended, be great and laſting.

able to effect. Man is compoſed of matter and intellect; and he who would be maſter of the laſt, muſt not neglect the culture of the other. Our Engliſh laws paſs over the private conduct of the citizens to attend to nuiſances, and impoſe taxes. Hence that abſurdity of conduct, that inconſiſtency, that extravagance of behaviour, that miſapplication of time, and wealth, which prevail among us, above all others, in private life. And yet how can the public carry on that joint purpoſe, which is the end of ſociety, or how can it flouriſh as a community, when individuals are left, each man to follow his own caprice? *

In

* To give one inſtance out of thouſands of this neglect. The fate of the nation is ſuppoſed to be bound up with trade, yet is every man permitted to finiſh his own manufactures in his own way, by which the national character and intereſt ſuffer daily among foreigners. This might be prevented, by permitting nothing to be exported, till it has endured the ſcrutiny of proper judges, and had its quality ſtampt on it by authority. This negligence, ere this, would have been as fatal in other branches, as it has already been in the Turkey trade, but for that emulation which naturally ariſes among competitors in the ſame branches.

This ſyſtem of directing by authority the private conduct of citizens, was carried a faulty length by the Jeſuits in Paraguay. There the individual was conſidered as a mere inſtrument of public order, and public induſtry, without having any thing permitted to his own feelings, or inclination. And our ſlaves ſuffer in proportion, as they are under a maſter, who is more or leſs teaſing and diſturbing them in their own hours, and little concerns. But ſurely, it would not be difficult to oblige, by the regulations of police, a man to be happy in himſelf, and to add happineſs to thoſe around him, by fixing on the proper medium in managing him, between careleſſneſs and inſtruction. The difference is exceeding great in our ſlaves,

when

In ſhort, we have too few circumſtances, that bring us together, or oblige us to conſider ourſelves as members of the ſame community. The ſocial nature of our religion has indeed hitherto made up for many of the other defects, and prevented us from feeling their ill conſequence. But in proportion as the notions of Epicurus become faſhionable among us, this tie drops off alſo, and, in all probability, unleſs we except our taxes, we ſhall ſoon have nothing in common as a people, but the ſea that ſurrounds our iſle. A deſire of pointing out the way of giving ſucceſs to the particular attempt here recommended, amidſt the difficulties that ſurround it, has inſenſibly led to this digreſſion.

when employed for their maſters and for themſelves. In the firſt caſe they drawl their taſk out, and weep under the burden, liſtleſs, and careleſs of ſucceſs. See them on a Sunday morning, that only day of liberty, going to market with their own proviſions, they walk ſtrong, their faces cheerful, their bodies erect, their perſons neat, and the whole man elevated and improved. Now the police that we recommend above, makes the man contribute to the general proſperity, while he imagines himſelf wholly taken up in purſuing his own intereſt, and exerting himſelf in his own buſineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Natural Capacity of Slaves vindicated.

TO thoſe who, with Moſes, believe that all men had one common parent, though for wiſe ends different families have ſince had diſtinguiſhing marks fixed on them, the ſubject of this chapter would be an unneceſſary digreſſion. But we are ſo fond of an hypotheſis, which indulges pride, and ſaves the trouble of enquiry, that the contrary, though leading to nothing generous, though narrow, ſelfiſh, and illiberal, has found powerful advocates, who draw after them crowds of admirers. Therefore, before we proceed to claim the rights of ſociety, and of a common religion for Africans, we muſt firſt put them in poſſeſſion of that humanity, which is pertinaciouſly diſputed with them. With this view I ſhall conſider the objections made to their capacity, from hypotheſis, from figure, from anatomy, from obſervation, and prove their natural powers, from reaſon and experience.

SECT. I.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from Philoſophy, conſidered.

HUME, in his Eſſays, broacheth an opinion concerning negroes, which, if true, would render whatever

whatever could be advanced in their favour, of no account. But I truſt his aſſertion, which certainly was made without any competent knowledge of the ſubject, will appear to have no foundation, either in reaſon or nature. In his Eſſay on National Characters he ſays, "That "mankind is compoſed of three or four different "races; and that there never was a poliſhed "ſociety, but of the white race, to which all "others are naturally inferior." In particular, he gives it as his formed opinion, "that there "never aroſe a man of genius among negroes."

Had he lived in the days of Auguſtus, or even but a thouſand years ago, his northern pride, perhaps, would have been leſs aſpiring, and ſatisfied to have been admitted even on a footing of equality with the ſable Africans. Virgil makes Dido inſinuate to Æneas, the reaſon he had to expect humane treatment among her people, not becauſe they were poliſhed Phœnicians, but becauſe they dwelt more immediately than other powers under the powerful influence of the ſun. And in the time of Charlemagne, a foreign divine, writing to the Britons to encourage them, tells them, as a thing remarkable, that though their country lay far "north, yet it "had produced ſeveral great men." Suppoſing theſe, and Hume's obſervations, (if indeed theſe deſerve the name) to have been drawn equally from fact, the concluſion is, that arts, ſciences, and the poliſhed life accompanying

them, are ſlowly progreſſive through nations and climates, rather than that the natives of any particular country are born incapable of them in their turn, as if intended to act an inferior part in the moral world.

Again, in his Natural hiſtory of Religion, he affirms, that if a traveller found a people void of religion, he would find them removed but few degrees from brutes. † He ſays, "In the "progreſs of human thought, the ignorant mul- "titude muſt firſt entertain ſome grovelling "familiar notion of ſuperior powers, before "they ſtretch their conceptions to that perfect "Being, who beſtowed order on the frame of "nature;" ‡ "to believe," ſaith he, "inviſible, "intelligent

† Yet, why, if ſuch be the man's genuine ſentiments, did he ſtrive, in all his writings, to diſgrace religion, and deſtroy every moral ſentiment connected with it among his countrymen? I will not ſay what name ſuch cool malevolence deſerves; but, on the other hand, let not his friends pretend to exalt the author of ſuch peſtilential tenets above every human character.

‡ This is with a view to eſtabliſh his favourite poſition, that polytheiſm was the firſt religion: becauſe, he there ſays, "Man could not poſſibly have degenerated from pure theiſm "to polytheiſm; and yet, we know, that polytheiſm has "prevailed." But, forgetting this impoſſibility of degeneracy, in order to ſhew the little conſequence of religion in general, and, as he humanely and reſpectfully obſerves, to ſet the religious ſects a wrangling, while he and a few more choice ſpirits are making their eſcape into the calm regions of philoſophy; he afterwards tells us, that man changes continu-

ally

" intelligent power, is a ſtamp ſet by the divine " Workman on human nature. Nothing dig- " nifies man more than to be ſelected from all " the other parts of the creation to bear this " image of the univerſal Creator." Here, then, we have religion for a badge of excellence or reaſon, and the want of it a mark of inferiority or brutality. Speaking of the white or ſuperior race, he goes on to affirm, that the bulk of mankind is incapable of being directed by the tenets of pure theiſm; that all popular religions, in the conception of their more vulgar votaries, are therefore, a ſpecies of demoniaſm; and that religious principles as they have prevailed in the world, are only ſick mens dreams.

Now, if we aſſume, as we juſtly may, that a perfection to be found very ſeldom in a ſuperior race, cannot be expected in any inſtance in an inferior race; according to him, we ſhall in vain look among negroes for what is rare in the white race. Here and there we ſee a man ſix feet in ſtature; but were there ſuch a nation as Fabuliſts deſcribe pigmies to be, would a traveller

ally from polytheiſm to theiſm, and from theiſm to polytheiſm; and, in his opinion, it is a matter of no conſequence. But conſiſtency in the apoſtle of infidelity is as little neceſſary, as in the lives of thoſe for whom the doctrine is calculated. There, is, indeed, ſomething ſo degrading in all Hume's philoſophy, as can recommend it only to a corrupt heart, and a vitiated underſtanding, which ſee nothing to wiſh for, or excite their emulation, out of the circle of animal indulgencies.

traveller expect to find a pigmy ſix feet tall? In ſuppoſing a diſtinction, we deny to the inferior every mark of excellency that diſtinguiſhes one indvidual of the ſuperior race from his fellows. If, then, his ſuppoſition be juſt, it follows that negroes are not intended for religion. For, whatever be his private ſentiments of revealed religion, he muſt allow it to be a ſpecies of general religion; and he admits the reception of religion to be a perfection in the ſuperior race, an advancement of their nature, that few in compariſon of the whole do really attain unto. He alſo allows that Chriſtianity contains many of the ſublime truths of theiſm, which, according to his opinion, no ſociety, even of white men, ever yet lived up to. It would then be abſurd to expect that negroes, an inferior race, ſhould be capable of an excellence, even in that leſs degree, ſuppoſed to be contained in Chriſtianity, to which a great proportion of the ſuperior race, I will not ſay cannot, but do not, attain.

But there is ſomething in a well-diſpoſed mind, that makes the man revolt againſt this cruel opinion: and, I truſt, nature flatly contradicts the aſſertion. As far as I can judge, there is no difference between the intellects of whites and blacks, but ſuch as circumſtances and education naturally produce.

It is true, there are marks, that appear now to be eſtabliſhed, as if ſet by the hand of nature to diſtinguiſh

diſtinguiſh them from the whites: their noſes are flat, their chins prominent, their hair woolly, their ſkin black. They who, from Moſes believe (and, ſince, on any ſcheme we muſt come to a particular time when the diſtinction took place, it is, to ſay no more, juſt as ſenſible as any other poſition) that the Deity parcelled out the earth into families and languages, may conclude, that theſe diſtinctions gradually took place at a period in which the ſons of men were conducted by the inviſible hand of Providence each to his allotted habitation. And, let it be remarked, that the characteriſtics of negroes ſhew themſelves chiefly about the face, where nature has fixed both the national attributes and the diſcriminating features of individuals, as if intended to diſtinguiſh them from other families, and bind them in the ſocial tie with their brethren. But their tongues are as muſical, † their hands as elegant and apt, their limbs as neatly turned, and their bodies as well formed for ſtrength and activity as thoſe of the white race.

After firſt writing the above, I was for a ſhort time

† It is ſurprizing, that during the continued rage for Italian ſingers, it has never entered among the whims of the age, to try if muſic might not be imported from the Banks of the Niger. It is certain the natural taſte of the Africans for muſic is conſiderable; and inſtruction and aſſiduity might change mungo's ſilly ſtage gibberiſh into the ſoft thrills and quavers of Italian eunuchs.* By the way, how would it have hurt the pride of an overweening Hume among the Romans, to have been told, that the time would come when his ſons ſhould be emaſculated to fit them for entertaining on a ſtage the barbarous Britons with effeminate muſic?

time made happy, by finding that Lord Kaims, in his firſt volume of Sketches, had indulged the ſuppoſition, that at the diſperſion, on the confuſion of languages, when the earth was divided among Noah's poſterity, national attributes firſt took place in the ſeveral families, in the ſeveral climates. But this ſatisfaction continued only till I entered on the peruſal of the ſecond volume: where it is affirmed, that the inhabitants of America have an origin diſtinct from the natives of the eaſtern hemiſphere. We ſhall, therefore, conſider theſe opinions together. *

That

* In a late well-known Hiſtory of America there is room to imagine, that the author entertains the ſame opinion with Lord Kaims. He guards it, indeed, by ſaying, that we ſhould be apt to believe the Americans had a different origin, if the ſcriptures did not aſſure us that mankind ſprung from one ſtock. The doctor did not reflect that many of his readers had not the ſame opinion of the ſcriptures as he entertained; and that his conjecture, as an hiſtorian, would weigh more with them, than his faith as a Chriſtian. He, probably, threw it out as a ſpeculative opinion, without attending to the inhuman conſequences deduced from it, and certainly he grounds it on very controvertible data. When he acknowledged the apparent difference, he ſhould have been aware of the ſcepticiſm of the age, and guarded againſt the concluſions that would eagerly be drawn from it.

Indeed, the friends of virtue have ſeldom been ſufficiently careful in this reſpect. Before any ſpeculative opinion be given to the world, a man ſhould turn it in his mind every poſſible way, to conſider to what uſes it may be wreſted by infidelity, when brought out under the ſanction of his name. A profeſſed enemy of virtue muſt be placed in particular circumſtances to be able to do much harm in the world by his writings; but every reverie of an eminent good man is eagerly ſeized

That without the information afforded by ſacred hiſtory, and without an attention to that extenſive plan of divine œconomy which it opens to us, we ſhould, at firſt ſight, imagine the ſeveral families inhabiting the earth to have had diſtinct progenitors, I readily acknowledge. But, ſince a hiſtory conſiſtent in itſelf, uncontradicted by authority, agreeing in analogy with the paſt and preſent ſtate of things, and ſupported by every poſſible collateral evidence of hiſtory, tradition, national manners, and cuſtoms, aſſures us that men had one common anceſtor, that at a period, when men had become numerous, profligate, and daring, their Creator, to puniſh their rebellion, and, (conformably to that divine benevolence which conſtantly brings good out of evil) to make it inſtrumental in advancing ſociety, and the more equal and ſpeedy cultivation of the earth, divided them into families and languages, giving to each diſtinct features, and a ſeparate ſpeech: this, I ſay, being the caſe, we are not left at liberty to purſue every wild conjecture. Both methods, at firſt,

ſeized on, if it can be turned to promote the purpoſes of profligacy. Would Locke, even in the eagerneſs of diſputation, have hazarded that wild conjecture, that poſſibly matter might think, could he have foreſeen that it would have eſtabliſhed him as a main pillar of materialiſm, and made him anſwerable for all its dreary conſequences. In arguing, as in wreſtling, we are not ſo careful to preſerve ourſelves from falling, as anxious to throw our adverſary.

firſt, were equally eaſy to ſupreme power; both, at firſt, ſtood equally in need of an extraordinary volition or exertion of Omnipotence. But we can obſerve a peculiar propriety in chooſing the latter. By giving man one ſimple origin, by beſtowing on him a common nature, a foundation was laid for the ultimate re-union of mankind, as well now in improved ſocial life as in futurity; a re-union intended to take place in time under the then-promiſed connecting head of the creation, and particularly rendered practicable in a unity of laws, government, and worſhip, by this univerſal equality eſtabliſhed among the various families; which keeps the way open for the equal and gradual improvement of their common nature. This is the ſyſtem taught by revelation: it is a plan that reaſon readily acknowledges, and benevolence chearfully adopts; it gives a grand, a flattering, and the only conſiſtent view of mankind, as having for its author the God of univerſal nature. He, who once has entertained it, muſt deſpiſe the conjectures of philoſophy, and the paradoxes of infidelity. And ſurely it ſhould gain for that revelation which diſcovers it a favourable, even an intereſted, hearing, equally from the politician and the philanthropiſt, as encouraging the nobleſt and warmeſt wiſhes that reſpect ſociety or man.

All

All here is conſiſtent and analogical. In certain attributes and qualities, in the mental powers, all mankind agree. The ſeveral families or ſuppoſed races have various marks, connecting them with each other, and diſtinguiſhing them from the reſt. The nations into which each each race is divided, with the common attributes of the race, have leſs apparent, yet ſtill ſufficient marks to diſtinguiſh them from others, and connect them together. Generally ſpeaking, even inhabitants of provinces have a common run of manners, language, or features, perhaps of all taken together, to bind them in ſome degree of union, and alſo diſtinguiſh them. After theſe, domeſtic likeneſſes take place, that have ſtill more intimate common marks, yet allow of a ſufficient variety to know a man from his brother.

Now, in the eye of true philoſophy, the diſtinguiſhing attributes of the individual, an hair more or leſs of this or that colour, a particular feature predominant, have as certain a diſtinct cauſe in nature, as what makes the difference between the faireſt European and moſt jetty African. If, therefore, we can reſolve the diſcriminating attributes of individuals into the neceſſary final cauſe of ſocial intercourſe, why heſitate we in aſcribing to the ſame cauſe the more obvious diſtinctions of the greater families?

lies? Or, why ſeek for cauſes leſs conſiſtent, apparently leſs worthy of the Deity, to pamper vanity and pride, when this is full and ſufficient to explain the fact?

For the period when this diſtinction took place, and the plan of reformation to which it looked, we are referred by Moſes to the confuſion of Babel, "When the Moſt High divided "to the nations their inheritance; when he "ſeparated the ſons of Adam; when he ſet "the bounds of the people according to the "number of the children of Iſrael:" a family, that, in the courſe of Providence, was ſeparated, and, when the fulneſs of time came, was employed, to inſtruct the world in that common relation to their Creator and to each other, which had been entangled in error, disfigured by fable, and perverted by fiction: for this office the Jews were well calculated; their turn for commerce made them wander and mix with, while their cuſtoms kept them diſtinct from, other nations. They were actuated with zeal for the unity of the Deity, and ſhewed a wonderful patience under perſecution.*

SECT.

* It is remarkable of Philo, the Jew Platoniſt, that though he gives no hint of his knowledge of Chriſtianity, which alone explains and vindicates the Jewiſh law, and points out its deſign; yet, with Chriſtians and Platoniſts, he ſuppoſeth the world to be the immediate work, and under the particular government

SECT. II.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from Form, conſidered.

THE marks that diſtinguiſh the African, and give room to the tyrannic European (for I believe the Aſiatic maſter is content with the pre-eminence that power imparts) to claim the higheſt

government of the Demiurgos, or word, and he affirms the ſeparation of the Jews to have had the gradual improvement of mankind in view.

In ſpite of the obligations that the world in general owes to the Jews, reſpecting theology and morality, yet ſo faſhionable is it for every author, in imitation of Voltaire, to go out of his way to abuſe them, that he who expreſſes a regard for them expoſes himſelf to contempt. But thoſe who deny them the privileges of a particular diſpenſation, in ſo doing exalt them above all nations of antiquity. For they alone had penetration to find out, and piety to worſhip, the univerſal Creator. The Roman twelve tables were a collection from all the Greek inſtitutes; how contemptible are they compared with the decalogue! That anciently the Jews were not the deſpiſed people which modern infidelity would fain repreſent them, appears clearly from the alliances formed by them, and the immunities and privileges granted them under the Perſians, Grecians, and Romans. The ſarcaſm of Auguſtus on them, may be accounted for from their being the only province that refuſed to make him a God. The ſneering of the Roman poets is, in the caſe of a conquered nation, but a poor proof of a matter of fact. But theſe cavillers have not reflected that the hiſtory of the Jews, from which their abuſe is drawn, conſiders them wholly as objects of morality and religion, under the immediate government of the Lord Jehovah, not with other hiſtories as a ſtate riſing and falling in the ſcale of opulence.

higheſt place, are, as I before obſerved, flat noſes, prominent chins, woolly hair, black ſkins; to which the curious anatomiſt adds ſkulls leſs capacious, calves of the legs leſs fleſhy, and elevated more towards the hams. Now, allowing all theſe, we want a link to connect them with inferiority. Leſs capacious ſkulls, indeed, will at once be deemed concluſive againſt us; but has the rule been applied, and is it found agreeable to obſervation in common life?

We know that climate, diet, and the various modes of life have great power over the features, form, and ſtature of man. Weſt Indian children, educated in England, improve not only in complexion, but in elegance of features: an alteration ariſing, perhaps, equally from change of climate, of diet, and of education.

opulence. Take the moſt virtuous people of this, or any ancient period, and meaſure their manners by the perfect law of God, and will they ſtand in a more amiable or praiſeworthy light than theſe deſpiſed out-caſts? Doth Jeremiah paint the depravity of his people in ſtronger lines than honeſt Latimer doth that of his age, though the period of reformation? Would Latimer ſoften his ſtile, were he to return among *us*? Farther, to be abuſed is a ſign of oppoſition and emulation rather than of inferiority. Why, among the various nations that inhabit the Britiſh iſles, is one alone abuſed by their wealthier neighbours, but becauſe it treads moſt cloſely at their heels? Had not the Jews made a diſtinguiſhed figure in the Roman Empire, the triumph that celebrated their conqueſt would have cloſed the account of them as a people.

tion. We ſee ſimilarity of features run through particular families. Shall we, therefore, be able to tell which carries the enſigns of genius; which bears the impreſſion of wiſdom, the proper foundation of power. On this ſuppoſition, hereditary indefeaſible right in Kings would not be a ſubject of ridicule, but of grave diſcuſſion. We need only to diſtinguiſh accurately the ſtamp of royalty to put ourſelves under the beſt poſſible government. Were this allowed, we could no longer laugh at the Egyptians for pretending to be able to chuſe out their God Apis from amidſt herds of common oxen. We ſee ſets of national features independent of colour. We ſee colour gradually verging from white to black, through every intermediate degree of tawny and copper. We ſee genius ſporting in various forms, tall in Newton, bulky in Hume, ſlender in Voltaire, diminutive and deformed in Pope. Where ſhall we fix the claim of genius? how purſue it through all the diverſity of human form? Or, were we to attempt it, and inſolently place ourſelves, or our tribe, in the higheſt rank, would not HISTORY daſh the vain garland from our brow? Would it not tell us that arts, ſciences, and the immediate capacity for them, are progreſſive in their nature and objects, viſiting ſometimes this region, ſometimes another?

Again,

Again, of the ſame ſociety, of the ſame family, ſome men are ſmooth, ſome hairy, ſome tall, ſome ſhort, ſome fair, ſome brown. But as theſe peculiarities are indiſcriminately diſtributed among individuals, otherwiſe equal, no body thinks of applying a rule to meaſure the difference, or of aſcribing to each its allotted ſhare of mental powers. Yet the moſt minute difference, a ſhade more or leſs, of this or that colour, muſt have as diſtinct a cauſe to produce it, as what divides a man from a monkey. And Mr. Hume, becauſe a tall bulky man, and alſo a ſubtile philoſopher, might have denied a capacity for metaphyſical ſubtilty to all who wanted theſe his great bodily attributes, as well as ſuppoſe capacity and vigour of mind incompatible with a flat noſe, curling hair, and a black ſkin.

It is ſaid of negroes, that their brain is blackiſh, and the glandula pinealis wholly black; a remark of which the Carteſian, with his audience-hall of perception, might make much. It has not come within my notice; nor on the principles of common ſenſe can any thing be inferred from it, unleſs anatomy had alſo determined that the jaundice affects not theſe parts, as a proof that this blackneſs ariſes not from the colour of the ſkin. But it is obſerved that their blood is of a dark red. This may be accounted

counted for from their poor ſalt diet, and their working naked in the ſun; and this colour in the blood may contribute to theſe appearances in the brain, while running through the capillary veſſels that are ſpread over every viſible part of it.

The ſkin takes its colour from a gelatinous ſubſtance, placed between the ſcarf and the proper ſkin: this ſubſtance approaches to jet black in proportion as the place of their nativity lies near the equator. In bad health, it equally, with the northern white, in the ſame circumſtances, changes into a ſickly yellow. Is not colour a precarious foundation for genius, ſeeing, in one view, we may ſuppoſe it to reduce the parts of a ſick white man, in another to increaſe thoſe of a ſick negro, by bringing both nearer to a ratio of equality.

Perhaps an enquiry into the nature of freckles in fair complexioned people might throw ſome light on the blackneſs of the African. The ſeat of their blackneſs and of freckles is the ſame; and they appear to be allied in nature, being both, probably, a ſecretion, and coagulation from the capillary veſſels, brought about in particular circumſtances by the miniſtry of the weather and ſun: for negroe children are born white, and the weather and ſun cauſe freckles.

When

When, therefore, we can account for the predisposing cause of freckles in particular persons, we shall know something of black skins: for a freckle may be defined a partial black skin; a black skin an universal freckle. It may be an help in the inquiry to remark, that a disposition to be freckled and strong red curling hair generally go together: as in this light, a black colour may be deemed the effect of weather on a delicate skin; and freckles as a similar effect on skins of a coarser, though not the coarsest grain. It would be curious to observe, among one's acquaintances, if their parts were in the inverse proportion of the fineness of their skins; or if a much freckled skin, with its curling hair, as approaching to black, be a sign of the owner's stupidity or dulness.

In northern climates men have long hair, and sheep have wool; in southern climates sheep have hair, and Africans woolly heads. In time we may be able to account for both without bringing genius into question. The flat noses of negroes, in many cases, may be accounted for from the custom of being constantly tied on their mothers backs when infants, and nature has prepared them for this, by shortening the cartilage of the nose. Sometimes they are procured, as an agreeable feature, by violence. In general they are a national feature, like the

the high cheek bones of the Scotch. Calves, ſwelling little, and placed high, are frequent, but not univerſal, or even general, in the legs of negroes; nor ſeem they to prevail much more among them, eſpecially among Creoles, than among the Creole whites, who are originally from Europe. Some negroes have legs, that in clumſineſs and lowneſs of calves, may vie with an Iriſh porter. The ſame may be affirmed of the prominent chin: it is frequent, not general; a convex face is not a rare ſight among them. If, therefore, an oblongated, or concave face be, as is ſuppoſed, connected with a ſmall cerebellum, it is not their general attribute. On the other hand, I have amuſed myſelf with obſerving, that ſome of the moſt improved of my acquaintances may be remarked for prominence of chin.

Whether theſe diſtinguiſhing marks of negroes were, as we have ſuppoſed, fixed by the Author of nature, as part of that plan of particular ſociety, and future reunion, that began with the race of man, whether cauſed by climate, or given to enable them to bear the fervours of the torrid zone, or whether all theſe cauſes have cooperated, while we conclude not on our ſuperiority over them, is matter of innocent diſputation. Of the laſt-mentioned cauſe it is certain, that though they work naked in the hotteſt hours, their ſkin never bliſters, while

while vagabond white ſailors bliſter wherever the ſun reaches them; and that they enjoy hot dry weather, while moiſture and cold make them ſhiver, and crouch down helpleſs and ſpent. On the whole, our obſervations are not of that length of time, and accuracy of manner, on which to build the fond opinion of northern ſuperiority; and reaſon and revelation forbid the haughty thought. Suppoſing the general ſuperioity of Europe over the natives of the torrid zone, while we argue from theſe principles, how ſhall we account for the Mexicans being leſs black, and more civilized within the equatorial girdle, than the Californians, inhabiting the region of genius, and white ſkins? or, according to the author of the obſervation, "how can improved ſociety change an appa-"rent law of nature?" Shall we ſuppoſe the equatorial circle to have been originally allotted to the black race, and that they have been expelled from all parts of it, except Africa?

SECT.

SECT. III.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from Anatomy, conſidered.

WE have gone through the ſeveral particulars, in which negroes viſibly differ from white men, and find, that ſhould they even mark a different race, they can in no reſpect determine their inferiority. We come now to conſider, what may be indicated from diminutive ſkulls.

A gentleman, juſtly celebrated for his accuracy in the courſe of his anatomical reſearches, has diſcovered a ſurprizing difference between European and African ſkulls. This ſuggeſted to him the idea of drawing out a ſeries of heads in this gradation; European, African, monkey, dog. The difference between the two firſt, is indeed ſtriking: the European, by the ſwelling out of the hinder part of the ſkull, ſupporting itſelf ſo as to ſhew the face almoſt perpendicular to the table on which it is placed; while the African, for want of ſuch ſupport, recedes from the perpendicular, and ſhews and obvious elongation of the lower jaw. The uſe that he has made of the diſcovery, has been the claſſing of the nations by their attributes, without taking genius into account. He rather throws it out but only as a conjecture, that negroes might have been the originals of mankind, he having obſerved, that

in

in all birds and beaſts, the originals, whence the tame ſorts are derived, are black, and that every variation from them approaches more or leſs to white.

Other men, leſs modeſt, have drawn from the obſervation, the concluſion of inferiority; it therefore will be neceſſary to pay a particular attention to it, or rather to their deduction from it. And we ſhall firſt obſerve, ſuppoſing this diſtinction real, that it muſt have ſome benevolent and general purpoſe; which purpoſe we ſhould ſearch for, and follow out; which purpoſe we know is not to feed pride, or indulge cruelty as theſe notions at preſent do. Matter of fact, or the real agency of nature, wherever diſcovered, may be aſſumed for the foundation of our reaſoning; nor ſhould we vainly imagine that ſhe ſtands in need of our feigned apology, or wants to lie concealed behind the flimſey texture of our conjectures. We may be unacquainted with her workings, or with the particular purpoſe that ſhe means to carry on. But we need not therefore fear, leſt what comes from her hands be found fraught with abſurdity, or lead to principles deſtructive of humanity, or derogatory to wiſdom and goodneſs. Let then the fact be, that negroes are an inferior race; it is a concluſion, that hitherto has lain hid and unobſerved, and while it leads only to an abuſe of power in the ſuperior race, it is better

better concealed, than drawn out into notice. Perhaps Providence may keep it doubtful, till men be ſo far improved, as not to make an ill uſe of the diſcovery. I am ſure, at preſent, the power, if it be a right, is delegated to many improper perſons. In the mean time, while the ſuperior race continues likely to abuſe it, every ſtep that leads to the eſtabliſhment of a point, the good purpoſe of which lies hid, while the evil purpoſe is ready at hand, ſhould undergo and ſtand the ſevereſt ſcrutiny before it receives our approbation.

1. In this caſe it muſt be eſtabliſhed as a maxim, that except in caſes of idiotiſm, or accidental ill conformation, the rational powers are in proportion directly as the quantity of brains. And hence it will follow, that with the foregoing exceptions, we may, among Europeans, bring genius to actual admeaſurement, and determine its degrees by the ſize of the poſſeſſor's head, juſt as an exciſeman gauges a beer barrel. How much of thoſe wranglings, that render us contemptible in the eyes of all Europe, ſhould we ſave in both houſes, if our competitors for power, inſtead of waſting the nation's time in a war of words, ſhould each ſubmit his head to this ſimple trial of its capacity?

2. In

2. In the ſecond place, this difference muſt be univerſal, without a ſingle exception, unleſs as above. For, as we have clearly proved, there muſt always be a degree of excellence to diſtinguiſh the loweſt of the ſuperior order, from the higheſt of the inferior. And this, it ſeems, in the caſe of the ſkull, is actually determined by the ſame gentleman againſt the ſuppoſition; for there is in his poſſeſſion an European ſkull of the ſame proportion as his African. In confirmation, I may ſay, that I know many inſtances, where the African excels individual Europeans, in the exerciſe of the reaſoning faculties.

3. That brains and reaſon are conſtantly in a direct ratio, will be diſputed in determining between the dog and monkey. I have heard much of monkeys; I have had opportunities of obſerving them; but nothing has led me to conclude, that they are equal, far leſs ſuperior, in reaſoning and ſagacity, to that humble friend of man, the faithful dog: certainly they are not ſo teachable, nor ſo capable of being attached by good offices, or gratitude. While on this head, we may obſerve, that naturaliſts ſuppoſe every various ſpecies of dog to come from the ſhepherd's cur; yet their ſhapes and qualities differ more ſenſibly, than does the African from the European.

4. Another

4. Another fact to be eſtabliſhed is, that the diſcriminating ſize of the African ſkull, and conſequent inferiority of reaſoning, continue in the fixed civilized generations, and that, after no given period, do they approach to European capacity. But allowing the difference to be at firſt real, I can, from obſervation, deny its continuance among Creole negroes.

Suppoſing the diſtinction to be found among the wilder tribes, we may well account for it in the following manner. Among ſavages, the powers of the mind are confined to few objects; and though their acuteneſs reſpecting them, in particular caſes, may exceed what can be imagined in poliſhed life, yet certain it is, that we have few well atteſted inſtances of the capacity of ſavages, in attaining the various accompliſhments, and abſtract notions, to be found in common among a civilized people. Their want of words in their native tongue, to expreſs, or communicate their ideas, would be a ſufficient bar. And this may be one great cauſe why, in North-America, the children of ſavages, after having been educated in the European manner, and taught to read and write, generally ſeize the firſt opportunity of returning to the rude cuſtoms of their fathers. Now we can perceive a gracious deſign in what Providence denies, as well as in what it beſtows. A man capable of varied knowledge, and verſatile exertion,

ertion, in a ſituation where he had few or no objects to work on, would be unhappy in himſelf, and a curſe to all around him.* His deſire, and power of exertion, are therefore confined within his opportunities and means of employment; and we have only to try, and diſcover the manner, in which nature has contrived to fit him for his rank. In doing this, we will conſider the difference between the ſkull and the reaſon of an African, and thoſe of an European, as an eſtabliſhed fact, from which we are to reaſon.

Suppoſe then an African, in his ſavage ſtate, to have leſs brains, and in conſequence leſs reaſon, yet ſtill a ſufficiency for his ſituation; the queſtion then is, whether his head, his brains, and his reaſon, would not expand in the ſucceſſive generations of civilized life. We know, that independent of the immediate organs of generation, the female, even in parts exactly ſimilar to thoſe in the male, is particularly adapted to the bearing, bringing, and ſuckling of children. Now the way of life, and the degree of exerciſe, that the female has uſed from her birth, may either check, or favour her conſtruction as a mother.

* What ſad work would the authors of our preſent new ſyſtems in philoſophy, religion, and government, make among the ſimple Chiqueſaws or Algonquins.

ther. In the ſavage ſtate, where hunting is the chief means of ſubſiſtence, food muſt be ſcanty, and only to be procured by patience and exertion. Savages therefore, both male and female, will be found lean, dry, muſcular. And this condition will particularly affect the female, becauſe in almoſt every ſavage tribe, ſhe is conſidered as a ſlave, intended to labour for, and ſerve her huſband. Will not theſe circumſtances, her ſcanty diet, and violent exerciſe, affect the conformation of her body, and render the few children whom ſhe brings forth, lean, ſlender, their heads ſmaller, more elongated, the brain of a drier, leſs elegant texture, juſt capable of that degree of intelligence which the ſavage ſtate requires? And may we not aſk, Is not this, in a certain degree, found to be the caſe of ſuch women among us, as are habituated to hard labour? Children of the loweſt peaſants, I believe, are as ſeldom found to take an high ſtation in literature, as in elegance of form. The middle ranks of life, that ſupply conveniencies to ſoften, not luxuries to drown nature, are moſt favourable to elegance of form and acuteneſs of underſtanding. Fiſhermen's wives, in the north of Scotland, labour more hardly than any other women in Britain; and their neighbours look down with contempt on the ſtupidity and ignorance found in the fiſhing villages. Hence may be accounted for the care

taken by the ancient Bramins to regulate the diet, exerciſe, and paſſions of their pregnant women.

But ſuppoſe ſavages to be ſo far civilized, as to be fixed in their habitations, to be well clothed, and properly fed; ſuppoſe their women treated with the regard that women generally receive in poliſhed life, eaſed of labour, employed only in regulating their family, or ſupported in idleneſs, or amuſement. Would not their bodies expand, and the ſexual qualities attain an higher perfection? Would not the embryo be better nouriſhed, the tender texture of the brain be leſs injured, than when the pregnant woman uſed ſcanty nouriſhment, and violent exerciſe? Would not the children be brought forth more plump? Would not the brain, favoured in its growth, force the ſkull to take its natural ſpherical form, and according to our hypotheſis, make the man more capable of improvement? And, this, as far as my opportunities of obſervation have reached, is the caſe of negroes who have been domeſtic ſlaves for three or four generations in our colonies, or have been made free three or four generations back.*

That

* The reaſoning here uſed was ſubmitted to the late celebrated Dr. Hunter, who was pleaſed to ſay, That, as far as anatomy was concerned, he thought it fair and concluſive. The ſame

That there is any eſſential difference between the European and African mental powers, as far as my experience has gone, I poſitively deny. That there may be an accidental or circumſtantial difference, I can eaſily ſuppoſe, and, ſhould it be true, think I can ſee the reaſon of it, as above explained. And this opinion is farther ſtrengthened by remarking, that, as far as the hiſtory of poliſhed ſociety goes back, both Aſiatic and European women have, from the firſt, been generally indulged, and accuſtomed to a domeſtic ſedentary life, favourable to the bearing and ſuckling of ſuch children as might be capable of advancement in the departments of reaſon, and in all that varied intelligence which poliſhed life calls forth and ſtands in need of. We have indeed one exception, and it is favourable to our concluſion. The Spartan

ſame gentleman, in his courſe of lectures at the Royal Academy, when ſhewing the gradation of ſkulls, a diſcovery which he candidly gave to its right Author, humanely obſerved, that he drew no concluſion from the difference in them reſpecting African inferiority. Several perſons, who had poſſeſſed the beſt opportunities of obſerving the capacity of Africans, had aſſured him, that there was no difference to be ſeen, but what could be traced to their depreſſed condition, and that there were inſtances where African ability had ſhewn itſelf in ſpite of all the diſadvantages under which it laboured. He underſtood, that the very doubt whether they might not be an inferior race, operated againſt the humane treatment of them; and God forbid, ſaid he, that any vague conjecture of mine ſhould be uſed to confirm the prejudice.—Such was the modeſty of true genius.

women were accuſtomed to a poor diet, and violent exerciſe, even to contending and wreſtling with men. And it is well known, that among the poliſhed Greeks, the Spartans were a nation of ſavages: their language, like that of other ſavages, broken, yet expreſſive; their knowledge confined to war, but to the part of a mere ſoldier; for they were once ſo abſolutely without a citizen fit to command their army, that they were obliged to employ a lame Athenian fidler as a general. Nay, ſo late as the Perſian war, they were forced to ſend to the Athenians to get inſtructed how to attack a barricado, made of baggage implements. Nor among the numerous artiſts and philoſophers that Greece produced, are any celebrated as Spartans by birth. For, if Lycurgus is to be reckoned an exception, we muſt ſay, that he formed the Spartan diſcipline, but was not himſelf formed by it. If one or two individuals of that ſtate are to be ranked amonged the philoſophers, for uttering a few abrupt ſentences, there is not a chief among the American ſavages but has an equal, perhaps a ſuperior, title to the ſtation.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Objections to African Capacity, drawn from Obſervation, conſidered.

THE ingenious author of a late Hiſtory of Jamaica, has treated this ſubject at conſiderable length, and appears to have formed, from his own obſervation, the ſame opinion as Hume's, of negroes being a diſtinct race. To ſuppoſe them only a diſtinct race, will not immediately affect our arguments for their humane treatment and mental improvement; but the conſequences uſually drawn from it ſhock humanity, and check every hope of their advancement; for, if allowed to be a *diſtinct* race, European pride immediately concludes them an *inferior* race, and then it follows, of courſe, that nature formed them to be ſlaves to their ſuperiors. And the maſter having eſtabliſhed theſe premiſes generally, and complimented himſelf with a place among the ſuperior beings, fairly concludes himſelf looſed from all obligations, but thoſe of intereſt, in his conduct towards them. A horſe and a bull, are animals each of a different ſpecies; but the ſuperiority has not been eſtabliſhed between them, nor the inferior brought into bondage by the lordly maſter. For argument's ſake, ſuppoſe negroes of a different and even

of

of an inferior race, ſtill we know they are capable of forming, and actually have formed, free independent ſocieties; and, though they have not yet attained the refinements and luxuries of Europe, yet have they ſhewn no ſmall ingenuity in compacting themſelves together, and made no mean progreſs in many of the arts of life. And to help to compoſe, and be a member of a free ſtate, is more honourable, and gives greater ſcope to the mental powers, than to be the moſt poliſhed ſlave in America or Europe. Still being ſuch, are they to be dragged away from a country adapted to their conſtitutions, from plenty of nutritious food, to which they have been accuſtomed from infancy,* to work as ſlaves, hungry, naked, torn with ſtripes, in a diſtant, unfavourable clime, for the avarice and luſts of, perhaps, ſome of the moſt worthleſs perſons of the pretendedly ſuperior families, with whom they had neither acquaintance or connection? Suppoſe different races, and that they vary in point of excellence; yet, in what chapter of nature's law is it declared, that one quarter of the globe ſhall breed ſlaves for the reſt? Where ſhall we find a charter conferring authority on the one, and

* Leſt this ſhould ſeem to contradict the reaſoning drawn from their original ſavage ſtate, it is neceſſary to obſerve that the ſlaves, as brought from Africa, differ greatly, in reſpect of ability, according as the nation from which they have been kidnapped has advanced more or leſs in ſocial life.

aſcertaining

aſcertaining the ſubmiſſion of the other? Are no conditions annexed, no rights reſerved, which, when violated, the ſubjected race can plead before their common Lord? Such a ſtate cannot be imagined as exiſting under the government of God: it is blaſphemy againſt his benevolence even to ſuppoſe it. The inanimate and brute creation was fitted for and ſubmitted to man's dominion; but man himſelf was left independent of every perſonal claim in his fellows. And nothing but an implied voluntary ſurrender of his independency to ſociety, for the benefits of law can control or leſſen his claim. But North-American or Weſt-Indian ſlavery implies no ſurrender, ſuppoſes no ſubmiſſion, but to neceſſity and force.

Had nature intended negroes for ſlavery, ſhe would have endowed them with many qualities which they now want. Their food would have needed no preparation, their bodies no covering; they would have been born without any ſentiment for liberty; and, poſſeſſing a patience not to be provoked, would have been incapable of reſentment or oppoſition; that high treaſon againſt the divine right of European dominion. A horſe or a cow, when abuſed, beaten, or ſtarved, will try to get out of the reach of the laſh, and make no ſcruple of attempting the neareſt incloſure to get at paſture. But we have

have not heard of their withdrawing themſelves from the ſervice of an hard maſter, nor of avenging with his blood the cruelty of his treatment.

To ſuppoſe different, eſpecially ſuperior and inferior races, ſuppoſes different rules of conduct, and a different line of duty neceſſary to be preſcribed for them. But where do we find traces of this difference in the preſent caſe? Vice never appeared in Africa, in a more barbarous and ſhocking garb, than ſhe is ſeen every day in the moſt poliſhed parts of Europe. Europe has not ſhewn greater elevation of ſentiment than has ſhone through the gloom of Africa. We can ſee cauſe why the nations, into which for the purpoſes of ſociety mankind has been divided, ſhould have characteriſtic marks of complexion and features, (and almoſt the whole of the preſent ſubject of diſcuſſion may be reſolved into theſe) to tie, by the reſemblance, fellow-citizens more cloſely and affectionately together. And, be it remarked, that theſe ſigns are mere arbitrary impreſſions, that neither give nor take away animal or rational powers; but, in their effect, are confined to the purpoſe for which they appear to have been impreſſed, the binding of tribes and families together. Farther, climate, mode of living, and accidental prevalence of particular cuſtoms, will account for many national characteriſtics.

But

But the ſoul is a ſimple ſubſtance, not to be diſtinguiſhed by ſquat or tall, black, brown, or fair. Hence all the difference that can take place in it is a greater or leſs degree of energy, a more or leſs complete correſpondence of action, with the circumſtances in which the agent is placed. In ſhort, we can have no idea of intellect, but as acting with infinite power and perfect propriety in the Deity, and with various degrees of limited power and propriety, in the ſeveral orders of intelligent created beings; ſo that there is nothing to diſtinguiſh theſe ſeveral created orders, but more or leſs power; and nothing to hinder us from ſuppoſing the poſſible gradual advancement of the lower into the higher ranks of created beings. But we cannot, in like manner, ſpeak of the change of a bull into an horſe, or of a ſwine into an elephant. The annihilation of the one is included in the tranſmutation into the other, becauſe in it that is loſt which conſtituted the ſpecific difference.

We can plainly ſee the propriety of different purſuits, and different degrees of exertion of the reaſoning energetic powers in the ſeveral individuals that compoſe a community, for carrying on the various purpoſes of ſociety. But there is not, therefore, a neceſſity to have recourſe to different ſpecies of ſouls, as if the peaſant had one ſort, the mechanic a ſecond, the man of

learning a third; yet whatever concludes for the propriety of races differing in point of excellence, will conclude alſo for a difference in theſe. And we ſee, in contradiction to all ſuch reveries, that communities flouriſh in proportion as the leſs of any other difference takes place, than that in which ſociety naturally diſpoſeth of its members for their mutual or joint benefit. The ſoul is verſatile, and being ſimple in itſelf takes its manner and tincture from the objects around it; it univerſally appears to be fitted only for that character in which it is to act: but that this is not an indelible character appears plainly in every page of the hiſtory of mankind. Look into our books of travels, and, in perſons no ways remarkable for genius or invention, admire the almoſt incredible efforts and productions of neceſſity. How often has the ſhepherd ſhone out as a ſtateſman, and the peaſant triumphed as a general? Can we ſuppoſe greater difference between the African and European, than, for example, between the keeper of ſheep, and the Governor of men; between leading an herd of gregarious animals out to paſture, and directing the complicated genius and bent of that various creature man, either to counteract or attain the purpoſes of ſociety: yet the only difference between them lies in the direction given to the mental faculties.

Thus

Thus far we have oppoſed opinion with argument, and, excepting a remark of which we ſhall take notice, we may leave all that the author above-mentioned has advanced of the inferiority of negroes, to be contraſted with the inſtances given by himſelf of their energy, abilities, and ſentiment, and to be compared with the inſtances of ſtupidity to be found in the moſt poliſhed nations. For, as we have proved, if we eſtabliſh the notion of different races, we muſt ſtill draw a line between the higheſt of the one, and the loweſt of that next above it. Particularly, we may ſay of his example, Francis Williams the negroe poet and mathematician, that though his verſes bear no great marks of genius, yet, there have been bred at the ſame univerſity an hundred white maſters of arts, and many doctors, who could not improve them; and, therefore, his particular ſucceſs in the fields of ſcience cannot operate againſt the natural abilities of thoſe of his colour, till it be proved, that every white man bred there has outſtripped him. But allowance is to be made for his being a ſolitary eſſay, and the poſſibility of a wrong choice having been made in him. Childiſh ſprightlineſs, for which it ſeems he was ſingled out for the trial, is not always, nor indeed often, a faithful promiſer of manly parts; too frequently it withers without fruit, like the early bloſſoms of the ſpring. Other gentlemen of

Jamaica

Jamaica ſpeak highly of his abilities, and of the favour they procured for him.

The remark in this author referred to, is that Mulattoes cannot propagate their kind with each other, or, at leaſt, that their children are few and ſhort-lived. Now it ſhould be obſerved that Mulattoe girls, during the flower of their age, are univerſally ſacrificed to the luſt of white men; in ſome inſtances, to that of their own fathers. In our towns, the ſale of their firſt commerce with the other ſex, at an unripe age, is an article of trade for their mothers and elder ſiſters; nay, it is not an uncommon thing for their miſtreſſes, chaſte matrons, to hire them out, and take an account of their gains; or, if they be free, they hire their ſervice and their perſons, to ſome one of the numerous band of bachelors. In this commerce they often contract diſeaſes, and generally continue in it till grown haggard and worn out. Thus few Mulattoes marry in their own rank, and fewer in a ſtate of health favourable to population. But where the above circumſtances take not place, Mulattoe marriages are extremely prolific, in every inſtance within my knowledge; and I can recollect more than ſix ſuch families where there is a numerous healthy offspring, and no doubt to be entertained of their legitimacy. As intellect is the peculiar attribute of man, and is a ſimple ſubſtance, it is incumbent on

on thoſe who maintain a difference in races and natural abilities, to tell us how the ſuperior intellects of a white perſon, and the inferior intellects of a negroe unite, and become a *tertium quid*, in their Mulattoe offspring. Is nature at the expence of forming ſeparate and different conditioned intellects for all the variety of caſts between complete white and black in our ſeveral colonies? *

SECT.

* In the above diſcuſſion we have aſſumed the exiſtence of intellect as confidently, as if modern philoſophy had not aſſerted man to be organized matter. The aſſertion, though unaccompanied by conviction, is ſuch a check to every aſpiring thought, that hardly, ſince I heard of the diſcovery, have I been able to reconcile one to myſelf; nor can I endure an opinion which would rob me of a comfort that ſmoothed every ill of life, and encouraged me to look up to futurity for a recompence, which my heart told me was reſerved for the humble and benevolent. It is true, that the abettors of it profeſs to believe, with Chriſtians, man's future reſtoration. But if man be a mere combination of atoms, when that combination is broken by death, the Being formed by it is annihilated. A reunion of the ſame particles will conſtitute a new Being, having no moral reſpect to what happened to the firſt, neither ſtained with its blame, nor inheriting its merit. Indeed imagination cannot combine together the idea of merit and matter, becauſe all the motions or actions (if we could uſe the term) of matter muſt be neceſſary and mechanical. The villain who *murders*, the Samaritan who *ſaves*, a man, deſerve equal applauſe. Volition, or the act of thinking, brings into exiſtence ſome new motion or form. But can we imagine ſuch a power lodged with matter, which muſt itſelf receive from without every particular impreſſion, every new direction?

Suppoſe matter capable of thinking, and the man to have every nerve employed in purſuing a certain train of reaſoning; from

SECT. V.

African Capacity vindicated from Experience.

HAVING ſhewn how little can be rationally concluded againſt the capacity of negroes, from their

from what energy, what attribute of matter ſhall we deduce the power of ſtopping in the full career of inquiry, and taking at once an oppoſite path? If thinking be the effect of organization, we can ſuppoſe no principle, no power lodged in the man to controul or direct it. It muſt proceed mechanically, till it be ſtopt mechanically. The man who reflects on what paſſeth in his mind, will perceive a difference between that inward act which weighs circumſtances, and that which determines him on action. But deliberation is incompatible with every notion of matter, becauſe it muſt ever be forcibly carried away by the predominant weight or power. To deliberate on, or balance circumſtances, muſt ſuppoſe ſome principle endowed with the power of election; but of this, matter, as matter, is incapable.

We cannot take into account what the Deity poſſibly can do in the plenitude of power. Wherever his works lie open to inquiry, we obſerve, that he invariably proceeds according to the original nature of the ſubject. Fire never freezes, froſt never warms. But if the Deity give to matter the power of thinking, he ſuperadds an attribute analogous to no other quality of matter within our knowledge. He can give to a bull the form and attributes of an horſe. But is not the bull annihilated, and a new animal formed in his ſtead? In like manner, to give to matter the ability of thinking, it muſt be changed into ſpirit, becauſe the attribute of thinking is incompatible with matter, even as the diſtinguiſhing qualities of an horſe cannot co-exiſt with thoſe of a bull.

The

their equatorial ſettlement, flat noſe, woolly head, projecting chin, high calves, and black ſkin, we come to fact. Now we know, that houſe negroes, who are generally Creoles, and are converſant with their white maſters, have all the addreſs, intrigue, and cunning of family ſervants in Europe. In their maſters they can mark the ridiculous point, the improper conduct, and often give theſe ſuperior beings that advice, which they have not wiſdom enough to follow; often manage their foibles, and mould them to their own intereſt. If, according to the Marchioneſs

The weight of a material being is the weight of its parts taken together, and may be divided into as many leſſer weights as there are component parts; its extent is a number of extents, in proportion to the number of its extended parts; and thus it holds of every quality, with which we are acquainted, except this new diſcovered attribute, no new quality being produced by the compoſition. We can affirm nothing of the whole that may not be affirmed in part of every particle. But we cannot thus divide volition into parts, or ſcatter it among the ſeveral limbs or organs, nor even ſhare it between the cerebrum and cerebellum. It is one ſimple uncompounded act.

If it be neceſſary to ſuppoſe a principle diſtinct from matter, to give form, motion, order, and deſign to things, may we not alſo ſuppoſe, that ſuch creatures as men, who feel theſe active powers within themſelves to a certain degree, may alſo be endowed with a portion of that ſpirit, which alone can begin and impreſs motion on inert matter.

Merit has been aſcribed to him who neglected the body to have leiſure to improve the mind; but on this ſcheme it is intirely abſurd. He who cares for the body cares for the whole man. A glutton is not an object of ridicule, but of ſober praiſe; he is employed in perfecting his ability to think.

chioneſs d'Ancre, favouritiſm and influence be marks of ſuperiority, many Weſt-Indian families muſt allow a preference to the Africans.

Negroes are capable of learning any thing that requires attention and correctneſs of manner. They have powers of deſcription and mimickry that would not have diſgraced the talents of our modern Ariſtophanes. The diſtillation of rum, the tempering of the cane juice for ſugar, which may be conſidered as nice chemical operations, are univerſally committed to them. They become good mechanics; they uſe the ſquare and compaſs, and eaſily become maſters of whatever buſineſs they are put to. They have a particular turn for muſic, and often attain a conſiderable proficiency in it without the advantage of a maſter. Negroe ſick nurſes acquire a ſurprizing ſkill in the cure of ordinary diſeaſes, and often conquer diſorders that have baffled an hoſt of regulars. Nor want they emulation, in whatever their obſervation can reach. Hence our black beaus, black belles, black gameſters, black keepers, black quacks, black conjurers, and all that variety of character, which ſtrikes in their maſters, or promiſes to add to their own dignity or intereſt. But what can we expect them to attempt in the higher departments of reaſon? Their ſlaviſh employments and condition; their being abandoned to the caprice of any maſter; the ſubjection in which it is thought neceſſary

to

to keep them all; theſe things depreſs their minds and ſubdue whatever is manly, ſpirited, ingenuous, independent, among them. And theſe are weights ſufficient to cruſh a firſt-rate human genius.

Had it been the lot of a paradoxical Hume, or of a benevolent Kaims, to have cultivated the ſugar-cane, under a planter, in one of our old iſlands; the firſt probably would have tried to have eked out his ſcanty pittance of two pounds of flour or grain per week, by taking up the profeſſion of a John Crowman, or conjurer; and doubtleſs would have got many a flogging for playing tricks with, and impoſing on the credulity of his fellows, to cheat them of their allowance. The turn of the other to works of taſte might have expreſſed itſelf in learning to blow a rude ſort of muſic from his noſtril, through a hollowed piece of ſtick; or, if bleſſed with an indulgent maſter, he might have learned to play by ear a few minuets, and fiddle a few country dances, to enable the family and neighbours to paſs an evening cheerfully together.

The truth is, a depth of cunning that enables them to over-reach, conceal, deceive, is the only province of the mind left for them, as ſlaves, to occupy. And this they cultivate, and

and enjoy the fruits of, to a ſurprizing degree. I have, as a magiſtrate, heard examinations and defences of culprits, that for quibbling, ſubterfuges, and ſubtilty, would have done credit to the abilities of an attorney, moſt notoriouſly converſant in the villainous tricks of his profeſſion. Their command of countenance is ſo perfect, as not to give the leaſt clue for diſcovering the truth; nor can they be caught tripping in a ſtory. Nothing in the turn or degree of their mental faculties, diſtinguiſhes them from Europeans, though ſome difference muſt appear, if they were of a different or an inferior race.

I had a young fellow, who was a notorious gambler, idler, liar, and man of pleaſure; yet ſo well did he lay his ſchemes, ſo plauſibly did he on all occaſions account for his time and conduct, that I, who could not puniſh unleſs I could convince the culprit that I had undoubted proof of his guilt, was hardly ever able to find an opportunity of correcting him. This lad, when he came a boy from Africa, ſhewed marks of ſentiment, and of a training above the common run of negroes. But ſlavery, even in the mildeſt degree, and his accompanying with ſlaves, gave him ſo worthleſs, diſſipated a turn, that I was obliged to ſend him out of the family, and have him taught a trade in hopes of his

his reformation. By this he inſenſibly acquired a little application, and has ſince attached himſelf to a wife. His father, he ſays, was a man of property, had a large houſhold, and many wives. He was kidnapped.

There is another lad, who could ſtand without flinching to be cut in pieces by the whip, and not utter a groan. As whipping was a triumph, inſtead of a puniſhment to him, I was obliged to overlook the moſt notorious faults, or affect generouſly to pardon them, rather than pretend to correct them. Yet this proceeds not from inſenſibility of pain, for if bleeding be preſcribed for him when ſick, he cries like a child, and ſhrinks from the operation. About twelve years ago he was caught in a fault, that by the cuſtom of the colony would have juſtified his maſter in carrying his puniſhment to any degree, ſhort of extremity. Pains were taken to ſet the enormity of it before him, and he was freely pardoned, and his fellows were ſtrictly forbidden ever to upbraid him with it. Since that time he has behaved remarkably well and truſt-worthy, and ſhewn a very uncommon attachment to the family. A third boy, who is ſenſible as a little lord of every affront offered to his dignity, could ſtand with the ſullen air of a ſtoic to receive the ſevereſt correction.

In truth, in ſpite of the diſadvantages under which they labour, individuals, on particular occaſions, have ſhewn an elevation of ſentiment that would have done honour to a Spartan. The Spectator, No. 215, has celebrated a rude inſtance in two negroes, in the iſland of St. Chriſtopher, which on inquiry I find to be true. I will confirm this by the relation of a deed, that happened within theſe thirty years, for which I have no name. As I had my information from a friend of the maſter's, in the maſter's preſence, who acknowledged it to be genuine, the truth of it is indiſputable. The only liberty I have taken with it, has been to give words to the ſentiment that inſpired it.

Quaſhi was brought up in the family with his maſter, as his play-fellow, from his childhood. Being a lad of towardly parts, he roſe to be driver, or black overſeer, under his maſter, when the plantation fell to him by ſucceſſion. He retained for his maſter the tenderneſs that he had felt in childhood for his playmate; and the reſpect with which the relation of maſter inſpired him, was ſoftened by the affection which the remembrance of their boyiſh intimacy kept a live in his breaſt. He had no ſeparate intereſt of his own, and in his maſter's abſence redoubled his diligence, that his affairs might receive no injury from it. In ſhort, here was

was the moſt delicate, yet moſt ſtrong, and ſeemingly indiſſoluble tie, that could bind maſter and ſlave together.

Though the maſter had judgment to know when he was well ſerved, and policy to reward good behaviour, he was inexorable when a fault was committed; and when there was but an apparent cauſe of ſuſpicion, he was too apt to let prejudice uſurp the place of proof. Quaſhi could not exculpate himſelf to his ſatisfaction, for ſomething done contrary to the diſcipline of the plantation, and was threatened with the ignominious puniſhment of the cart-whip; and he knew his maſter too well, to doubt of the performance of his promiſe.

A negroe, who has grown up to manhood, without undergoing a ſolemn cart-whipping, as ſome by good chance will, eſpecially if diſtinguiſhed by any accompliſhment among his fellows, takes pride in what he calls the ſmoothneſs of his ſkin, its being unrazed by the whip; and he would be at more pains, and uſe more diligence to eſcape ſuch a cart-whipping, than many of our lower ſort would uſe to ſhun the gallows. It is not uncommon for a ſober good negroe to ſtab himſelf mortally, becauſe ſome boy-overſeer has flogged him, for what he reckoned a trifle, or for his caprice, or threatened him with a flogging, when he thought he did not

not deſerve it. Quaſhi dreaded this mortal wound to his honour, and ſlipt away unnoticed, with a view to avoid it.

It is uſual for ſlaves, who expect to be puniſhed for their own fault, or their maſter's caprice, to go to ſome friend of their maſter's, and beg him to carry them home, and mediate for them. This is found to be ſo uſeful, that humane maſters are glad of the pretence of ſuch mediation, and will ſecretly procure it to avoid the neceſſity of puniſhing for trifles; it otherwiſe not being prudent to paſs over without correction, a fault once taken notice of; while by this method, an appearance of authority and diſcipline is kept up, without the ſeverity of it. Quaſhi therefore withdrew, reſolved to ſhelter himſelf, and ſave the gloſſy honours of his ſkin, under favour of this cuſtom, till he had an opportunity of applying to an advocate. He lurked among his maſter's negroe huts, and his fellow ſlaves had too much honour, and too great a regard for him, to betray to their maſter the place of his retreat. Indeed, it is hardly poſſible in any caſe, to get one ſlave to inform againſt another, ſo much more honour have they than Europeans of low condition.

The following day a feaſt was kept, on account of his maſter's nephew then coming of age; amidſt the good humour of which, Quaſhi hoped

hoped to ſucceed in his application; but before he could execute his deſign, perhaps juſt as he was ſetting out to go and ſolicit this mediation, his maſter, while walking about his fields, fell in with him. Quaſhi, on diſcovering him, ran off, and the maſter, who is a robuſt man, purſued him. A ſtone, or a clod, tripped Quaſhi up, juſt as the other reached out his hand to ſeize him. They fell together, and wreſtled for the maſtery, for Quaſhi alſo was a ſtout man, and the elevation of his mind added vigour to his arm. At laſt, after a ſevere ſtruggle, in which each had been ſeveral times uppermoſt, Quaſhi got firmly ſeated on his maſter's breaſt, now panting and out of breath, and with his weight, his thighs, and one hand, ſecured him motionleſs. He then drew out a ſharp knife, and while the other lay in dreadful expectation, helpleſs, and ſhrinking into himſelf, he thus addreſſed him. "Maſter, I was bred up with you "from a child; I was your play-mate when a "boy; I have loved you as myſelf; your in-"tereſt has been my ſtudy; I am innocent of "the cauſe of your ſuſpicion; had I been "guilty, my attachment to you might have "pleaded for me. Yet you have condemned "me to a puniſhment, of which I muſt ever "have borne the diſgraceful marks; thus only "can I avoid them." With theſe words, he drew the knife with all his ſtrength acroſs his own

own throat, and fell down dead without a groan, on his maſter, bathing him in his blood.

Had this man been properly educated; had he been taught his importance as a member of ſociety; had he been accuſtomed to weigh his claim to, and enjoy the poſſeſſion of the unalienable rights of humanity; can any man ſuppoſe him incapable of making a progreſs in the knowledge of religion, in the reſearches of reaſon, or the works of art? Or can it be affirmed, that a man, who amidſt the diſadvantages, and gloom of ſlavery, had attained a refinement of ſentiment, to which language cannot give a name, which leaves the bulk of poliſhed ſociety far behind, could want abilities to acquire arts and ſciences, which we too often find coupled with a fawning, a mean, a ſlaviſh ſpirit? Others may, I will not believe it.

This is a truly mournful inſtance of a nobleneſs and grandeur of mind in a negroe. The following, though allied to diſtreſs, is of a leſs awful nature, but will ſhew, that all the nobler qualities of the heart are not monopolized by the white race.

Joſeph Rachel was a black trader in Barbadoes; he dealt chiefly in the retail way, and was ſo fair and complaiſant in buſineſs, that in a town

town filled with little peddling ſhops, his doors were thronged with cuſtomers. I have often dealt with him, and found him remarkably honeſt and obliging. If any one knew not where to procure an article, Joſeph would be at pains to ſearch it out, to ſupply him, without making an advantage of it. In ſhort, his character was ſo fair, his manners ſo generous, that the beſt people ſhewed him a regard, which they often deny men of their own colour, becauſe not bleſſed with like goodneſs of heart.

In 1756 a fire happened, which burned down great part of the town, and ruined many of the inhabitants. Joſeph luckily lived in a quarter that eſcaped the deſtruction, and expreſſed his thankfulneſs, by ſoftening the diſtreſſes of his neighbours. Among thoſe who had loſt their all by this heavy misfortune, was a man to whoſe family Joſeph, in the early part of life, owed ſome obligations. This man, by too great hoſpitality, an exceſs common enough in the Weſt-Indies, had involved his affairs, before the fire happened, and his eſtate lying in houſes, that event intirely ruined him; he eſcaping with only the clothes on his back. Amidſt the cries of miſery and want, which excited Joſeph's compaſſion, this man's unfortunate ſituation claimed particular notice. The generous, the open temper of the ſufferer, the obligations that Joſeph had to his family, were ſpecial and powerful

motives for acting towards him the friendly part.

Joſeph held his bond for ſixty pounds ſterling. "Unfortunate man," ſays he, "this ſhall "never come againſt thee. Would heaven thou "could ſettle all thy other matters as eaſily! "But how am I ſure that I ſhall keep in this "mind: may not the love of gain, eſpecially, "when, by length of time, thy misfortune has "become familiar to me, return with too ſtrong "a current, and bear down my fellow-feeling "before it? But for this I have a remedy. "Never ſhalt thou apply for the aſſiſtance of "any friend againſt my avarice." He got up, ordered a current account that the man had with him, to a conſiderable amount, to be drawn out, and in a whim, that might have called up a ſmile on the face of charity, filled his pipe, ſat down again, twiſted the bond, and lighted his pipe with it. While the account was drawing out, he continued ſmoking, in a ſtate of mind that a monarch might envy. When finiſhed, he went in ſearch of his friend, with the account diſcharged, and the mutilated bond in his hand. On meeting with him, he preſented the papers to him with this addreſs. "Sir, I am ſenſibly "affected with your misfortunes; the obligati-"ons that I have received from your family, give "me a relation to every branch of it. I know "that your inability to ſatisfy for what you owe,

"gives

"gives you more uneaſineſs than the loſs of "your own ſubſtance. That you may not be "anxious on my account in particular, accept "of this diſcharge, and the remains of your "bond. I am over-paid in the ſatisfaction that "I feel, from having done my duty. I beg "you to conſider this only as a token of the "happineſs that you will impart to me, when-"ever you put it in my power to do you a good "office." One may eaſily gueſs at the man's feelings, on being thus generouſly treated, and how much his mind muſt have been ſtrengthened to bear up againſt his misfortunes. I knew him a few years after this; he had got a ſmall poſt in one of the forts, and preſerved a decent appearance.

But his hoſpitable turn continued even after he had loſt the means of indulging it. He has often invited five or ſix acquaintances, or ſtrangers, to ſpend the evening when he has not had even a candle to light up before them. Whenever his ſervant ſaw him come home thus attended, and heard him call away, as in his better days, his reſource was to run over to Joſeph, and inform him that ſuch and ſuch gentlemen were to ſup with his maſter. Immediately the ſpermaceti candle, and punch, and wine of the beſt quality were on the table, as if by magic; and ſoon after Joſeph's ſervants appeared, bringing in a neat ſupper, and wait-

ing on the company. All this was done without a proſpect of return, purely to indulge his gratitude, and ſupport his friend's credit. And will any man pretend to look down with contempt on one capable of ſuch generoſity, becauſe the colour of his ſkin is black?

Some readers, perhaps, may give Joſeph more credit for the following ſtory. A colonel ————, a moſt penurious miſer, uſed to call frequently at Joſeph's ſhop, on pretence of cheapening cocoa: he was always ſure to carry away as much for a taſte as his pocket would hold, but never bought any. Joſeph, at firſt, was at a loſs what to do. He knew, that, being a negro, his evidence would not be taken in court, even for the value of a penny againſt a white man. But the colonel continuing his depredations, he was loth to ſee his cocoa diminiſh daily before him without any thing in return for it. He therefore hired a white man for clerk, and ordered him to weigh out a bag of cocoa, and keep it particularly under his own care, to ſupply the colonel with taſtings whenever he ſhould call. The colonel ſoon emptied the bag, and then Joſeph delivered in his account. The colonel ſtormed, ſwore, and threatened till out of breath, when Joſeph took the opportunity of informing his honour of the ſteps he had taken. His avarice now alarmed him with the expences of a law-ſuit: and ſuggeſted

that

that being ſo fairly taken in, there was nothing to be done, in prudence, but to pay the money peaceably. By this innocent ſtratagem Joſeph got rid of the colonel's taſting viſits.

I ſhall only give one more inſtance in favour of the negroes; though a volume might eaſily be filled. A lieutenant of a regiment in garriſon at St. Chriſtopher's died, and left his ſon an orphan. A particular family had promiſed him, on his death-bed, to take care of his boy; but he was wholly abandoned, and forced to keep among the negroe children, and live on ſuch ſcraps as he could find. In this ſtate, he caught that loathſome diſeaſe the yaws, which became a new reaſon for giving him up to his fate. In this ulcerated condition, Babay, a poor negreſs, found him, took him into her hut, got him cured, and maintained him till he was able to work for himſelf. The firſt money that he earned went to purchaſe her freedom. He took her home to his houſe, and, as long as ſhe lived afterwards, which might be upwards of forty years, treated her with the moſt reſpectful kindneſs. He gave her a moſt expenſive burial, and had a funeral ſermon preached over her. As that ſermon was delivered before people acquainted with her character, and mentioned ſuch circumſtances as I wiſh here to remark, I ſhall give an extract of what was addreſſed to the ſlaves that attended,

relating

relating to her. "This good woman was like "many of you, a ſlave; and, as ſuch, la- "boured under every diſadvantage which you "can plead for not doing your duty; yet, in "this ſituation, ſhe ſhewed, in her conduct, "the nobleſt fruit of religion, charity. A "helpleſs child, left an orphan, in a ſtrange "country, far from any relation or even ac- "quaintance to his family, abandoned by thoſe "who undertook to rear him, from her alone "could raiſe pity, or engage attention. When "left, by all of his own rank and colour, to "periſh in a loathſome diſeaſe, though ſon to "a ſervant of the public, with whom every "true lover of his country ſhould have ſympa- "thized, ſhe, alone, lodged him, nurſed him "carefully, got him cured, and put him in a "way to provide for himſelf. This inſtance "of generoſity, found in one of her condition, "is a proof that noble and diſintereſted actions "are not, as many think, confined to advan- "tages of birth or education; for ſhe had "nothing to direct her but God's grace working "on a tractable heart: and this benevolent "temper ſhewed itſelf in every part of her "behaviour through life, and was accompanied "in her with a true ſenſe of religion. She "was well acquainted with what ſhe ought to "know and believe; and always ſpoke of "religion with an earneſtneſs, and ſerioufneſs, "and knowledge, which I wiſh were more

"general

" general than I have found it among thoſe " who eſteem themſelves her betters. Here " then is a ſhining example of goodneſs, on " your own level, for your imitation." *

* The following thoughts have been communicated lately to the author by a humane intelligent ſea officer, who, in his command on foreign ſtations, did not think he went out of his line by pleading and promoting the cauſe of humanity. They are particularly pertinent in this place to prove Africans proper objects of improvement and police.

" I have talked, I have written; I have often bluſhed for " the unnatural tyranny exerciſed in our Weſt Indian Iſles; " where Proteſtants even exceed Papiſts in barbarity to the " unfortunate ſlaves that have become their purchaſed pro- " perty. Particularly, I have, in the warmeſt manner, re- " commended their imitation of the Roman Catholics in " beſtowing baptiſm on their ſlaves, inforcing my argument " from this conſideration:" " You acknowledge the Chriſtian " path, in which you walk, to lead to a happy future ſtate; " how can you then, as men or Chriſtians, refuſe that to your " ſlaves, which you believe will intitle them to ſalvation?" " I cannot boaſt of the impreſſions that theſe arguments made " in our Weſtern Archipelago. But, finding the planters in " the colonies adjoining to Spaniſh ſettlements, complaining " that their ſlaves were daily deſerting from them, I thought I " had found an argument to urge intirely in their own way:" " Your ſlaves deſert to the Spaniards, becauſe they grant them " greater privileges than you do, and make Chriſtians of them. " Uſe you the ſame methods, and they will not think of " leaving you."

" The negroes along the ſea-coaſt of Africa (particularly " among the French) are well-informed, eaſy, kind, generous, " and have a better ſenſe of right and wrong than any other " people I have ever viſited. I was thrown among them in a " ſtate of wretchedneſs and ſickneſs, with ſeventy-ſeven dying " men, being abandoned by our own people, who refuſed me " aſſiſtance and medicines. I caſt myſelf on the charity of

" ſavages,

" ſavages, and received more inſtances of compaſſion and " goodneſs from them than from all the Chriſtians I have ever " known. From this exemplary benignity in this people, " who are inhabitants about Cape Verd, may be collected the " probability of introducing freedom and Chriſtianity among " them."

" On the ſouthern continent of Africa the natives are well " informed, well clad, dwell in ſuperb houſes, abound in " cattle and other poſſeſſions. Some Portugueſe are ſettled " among them, but, I believe, they draw their knowledge, " merchandize, and grandeur from their communication with " Mozambique, Arabia, and Egypt. The places I chiefly " refer to, are Paulo Loando and St. Philip de Buengala."

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Plan for the Improvement and Converſion of African Slaves.

I HAVE now gone through the ſeveral preliminary articles that reſpect ſlaves in our ſuglar colonies. I have deſcribed their condition at preſent. I have ſhewn that there would be good policy and much profit, both to the ſtate and the maſter, in advancing it; that this advancement muſt go hand in hand with their inſtruction in religion; and, again, that inſtruction is neceſſary to make them good and uſeful ſubjects. I have vindicated for them the natural equality and common origin of mankind. I have claimed, as their due, the attention of government. I have endeavoured to intereſt humanity, policy, and religion in their favour. It only remains to point out the method in which theſe ſhould coperate for their advantage. That which I am now to offer, I propoſe not as the beſt poſſible, but as the moſt practicable method, having reſpect to the ſelfiſhneſs and prejudices of the age. Were government and people once well awakened to their own intereſt, and heartily inclined,

ſomething much more promiſing might be ſtruck out. The chief advantages of the following plan is, that it may be ſet on foot by government, without depending on the caprice of individuals, or affecting their intereſt; that it will be gradual in its operation, and therefore more likely to accommodate itſelf to the ordinary courſe of human affairs. At the worſt, it adds only one more to the many Utopian ſchemes that volunteer reformers produce for the benefit of the heedleſs public. Should it ever be found as impracticable in itſelf, as it is in reſpect of me, it may lead ſome more happy man to a ſcheme both practicable and ſucceſsful. In the mean time it may contribute to ſoften their preſent treatment; and it will be a teſtimony of the author's affection to the cauſe of humanity, religion, and his country. The event muſt be left to Providence. It will be adapted to the ſtate of a particular colony; but may eaſily be accommodated to others. I ſhall only premiſe, that the ſeveral hints occaſionally given in the courſe of the work, and what has been ſuggeſted in the caſe of particular plantations, chap. III. ſect. V. is offered to every other owner of ſlaves, as far as circumſtances will permit.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Eſtabliſhment of Clergy, and their Duty among Slaves.

THE iſland of St. Chriſtopher's, of which we particularly treat, is divided into nine pariſhes, and is, at preſent, ſupplied by five miniſters; the emoluments of two pariſhes being barely ſufficient for the decent ſupport of a family, without ſuppoſing any proviſion made for a widow and children. But, to carry on our plan of reformation among ſlaves; nay, indeed for the due ſupport of an eſtabliſhed religion among the white inhabitants, it would be neceſſary that each pariſh ſhould have its own incumbent. This would give the proportion of one miniſter to about 3000 inhabitants; but it would require the proviſion allotted for their maintenance to be increaſed. Of this proviſion I ſhall not at preſent treat; though, whenever it becomes an object of police, it will be eaſy to propoſe a fund for their decent maintenance without any ſenſible new expence to government or people, and chiefly by changing the mode of certain preſent impoſts. In the proportion here ſuggeſted, many pariſhes, eſpecially in Jamaica, would require to be divided; but the miniſters could eaſily and profitably

fitably for the colony be provided for there by allotments of unappropriated funds. *

I would propoſe alſo a ſchool to be eſtabliſhed in each pariſh; the ſchool-maſter to be under the miniſter's direction, and to aſſiſt in inſtructing and bringing forward the young children. A houſe, the place of pariſh clerk, and ſome other ſmall appointment, with the benefit of ſcholars, would always procure decent men for the office. †

Suppoſe

* Barbadoes contains eleven pariſhes, each with its miniſter; the town pariſh has alſo a fixed curate. In Antigua there are ſix pariſhes, and ſix miniſters. In Montſerrat there are four pariſhes, and two miniſters. In Nevis five pariſhes, and three miniſters. In Grenada there are uſually two miniſters without appointments; it is the ſame in Dominica. In St. Vincent's there are two miniſters, and very ſmall appointments. In Tortola there is no fixed miniſter. In Anguilla the miniſter has been long dumb for want of a maintenance. In Jamaica there are nineteen pariſhes, ſome of them as large as the whole Leward Inſland government, and ſome of them without church or miniſter.

† Indeed a very ſmall proportion of thoſe immenſe ſums that are thrown away under pretence of educating their children in England, would procure men properly qualified to ſettle in theſe ſchools in the iſlands, which would not only ſave to the parents much needleſs expence, but alſo preſerve the morals of the youth, and train them up to be uſeful to themſelves and families. A young Weſt-Indian, conſigned to a ſugar-factor to be educated at a diſtance from his father, ſoon begins to know no other relationſhip between him and his parent, than that of banker. He makes expenſive connections, acquires habits of diſſipation,

Suppoſe then a proper number of ſober, pious miniſters ſettled in the colonies, each in his own cure, and employed in the duties of his function, ſupported by government, and encouraged by good men. Let the miniſter, every Sunday, perform the uſual morning ſervice to his white pariſhioners, and ſuch ſenſible negroes as can attend; in the afternoon let the ſervice be adapted to the negroes. Inſtead of a common ſermon, let him explain to them, in courſe, a chapter of the New Teſtament, making them intimately acquainted with the miſſion and hiſtory of our Saviour, and our relation to him, as the immediate Creator, Head, and Redeemer of the world. Let the clergyman frequently give a ſhort expoſition of the apoſtle's creed, in eaſy terms, and explain the ten commandments in words adapted to their capacity.

Let the miniſters jointly compoſe forms of devotion, ſome to be uſed in private by the negroes, others for their field morning and evening prayers, and others, more comprehenſive,

diſſipation, is never made to feel his own weight, and ſeldom learns to turn out uſefully in life. Where parents have not the vanity or are not in circumſtances to ſend them to England, but content themſelves with giving them an uſeful education near them, Weſt-Indian children ſhew that they want neither capacity nor application.

to be uſed by the whole gang on Sundays, in the plantation. Let them be drawn up ſhort, ſimple, inſtructive, expreſſive, of their relation to God, to a Saviour, to ſociety, and of the reſpect that a candidate for heaven owes to himſelf. Indeed it would be found a great advantage in carrying on the work, if the forms were compoſed to ſerve in all the colonies generally. Maſters ſhould be exhorted to ſend, at convenient times, their moſt ſenſible ſlaves to the miniſter, to be inſtructed in theſe forms, that they may teach the reſt, and take the lead in the plantation evening and morning devotions. If the maſter, manager, or overſeer, were conſtantly to lead their Sunday plantation devotions, it would have an excellent effect. Negroes, who are well treated and in ſpirits, ſing at work. A few eaſy ſingle ſtanzas might be collected or compoſed, to be uſed inſtead of their common ſongs. In every thing drawn up for them, the expreſſion ſhould be ſimple, and the meaning obvious.

Let the miniſter viſit the plantations in rotation, at convenient times, to inquire into the behaviour and improvement of the ſlaves, to commend, reprove, admoniſh, and pray with them. To give him reſpect and influence, let all be obliged to appear before him decently clothed.

Let

Let him pay a particular attention to children; that while their minds are tender, before their diſpoſitions be foured by the impoſitions of ſlavery, they may make ſome progreſs in the knowledge of their duty. As they may be better ſpared from plantation work than the reſt, they may attend on the miniſter on particular week days for inſtruction.

In common caſes, no culprit ſhould be puniſhed by the maſter, who can find a ſenſible ſober negroe to be ſurety for his good behaviour: but both ſurety and culprit ſhould be frequently admoniſhed by the miniſter of the nature of the engagement; and this practice would give him many opportunities of imprinting on their minds the obligations of virtue, the claims of ſociety, the difference between right and wrong. In ſhort, one circumſtance that has happened among themſelves, properly diſcuſſed before them and imprinted on their minds, will have a better and more laſting effect than a thouſand diſcourſes on general good and evil.

Wherever there is room for ſhewing mercy, it ſhould be done at the miniſter's interceſſion, that he may be conſidered as a mediator between the ſlave on one ſide, and the maſter and the law on the other. He ſhould never appear in any other light among them than that of their inſtructor

inſtructor and benefactor, praying with them, interceding for them, or doing ſome good office to them; that their eſteem for his perſon, and gratitude for his kindneſs, may ſtand to them in place of a law, may produce in them a love for his doctrine, and be a pledge of their good behaviour to the community. One cauſe of the author's little ſucceſs among his own ſlaves was, doubtleſs, the neceſſity of mixing the authority of the maſter in domeſtic matters, with the exhortations of the teacher; and the ſuperior ſucceſs of the Moravians may be accounted for, from their being ſeen by their ſcholars, only in the benevolent light of inſtructors.

The miniſters ſhould have monthly meetings at each other's houſes, to which well-diſpoſed gentlemen of the neighbourhood ſhould be occaſionally invited: at theſe they might talk over their difficulties, their ſucceſſes, their plans. Every meaſure ſhould be carefully diſcuſſed before carried into execution; the plan of inſtruction ſhould be uniform; the prayers, precepts, hymns, ſhould all ſpeak one language. And we might hope that the miniſters, relieved by a decent proviſion from worldly care, countenanced by government, reſpected by good men, and encouraged by each other in this good work, would ſoon find pleaſure in it, and ſee it proſper in their hands.

But

But ſome greater care ſhould be taken in the choice of perſons deſigned for this labour, and of candidates ſent over from the colonies for ordination, than has been hitherto uſual. It is now growing into a cuſtom, in the Weſt-Indies, for men that have diſſipated their patrimony, to flee to the church as their laſt refuge from poverty, often with very ſlender pretenſions reſpecting education, and leſs reſpecting decency of character. Yet, if any diſtinction were proper, the coloniſts, even ſetting aſide this plan of the converſion of their ſlaves, by reaſon of their uſual careleſſneſs and diſſipation, require a ſuperior attention to the character of their paſtors. Perhaps the fitteſt perſons that could be ſent out would be diſcreet curates from England, accuſtomed to teaching, whoſe hopes of preferment are ſmall, to whom theſe ſettlements would be a deſirable advancement. The Society for Propagating the Goſpel might have a committee to examine, ſelect, and recommend them to the ſeveral governors.

SECT.

SECT. II.

General Improvement of Slaves.

I HAVE vindicated the natural capacity of African ſlaves, have laid before the reader their preſent condition, have proved that to advance them in religion and ſocial life would profit both the public and their maſters, and have propoſed a plan for their inſtruction. We may now make this inference reſpecting the original deſign of this work. Were the yoke of ſlavery made to ſit more eaſy on their necks; were they taught to think more juſtly of themſelves, more moderately of their maſters; did their condition admit of the enjoyment of the common conveniencies of life; were theſe extended and ſecured to them; were their families and offſpring to be conſidered as their own, not wantonly to be torn from them at the caprice, or to pay for the extravagance of their tyrant; then would they be found capable of arts that are uſeful in ſociety here, and of extending their own views to futurity. Then, when they had become ſenſible of their relation to God, would his religion, which we wiſh to introduce, have a fair chance among them; they would eſteem themſelves more worthy of it, more nearly connected with it, more ſtrictly obliged to inquire into its doctrines,

and

and conform their lives to its laws. Then, in reſpect of intellect, would they be found equal to the people of any country.

French ſlaves enjoy a great advantage for the admiſſion of religion over Engliſh ſlaves, in the familiarity that French manners permit them to live in with white people: an advantage that is increaſed by the preſence of their owners, who generally live and converſe with them, ſuperintend and partake with them in their labours, inſtead of ſubmitting them to hirelings; many of whom, in ſullen ſilence, think of nothing but of extorting labour out of them, at the expence of health, life, and every human feeling; and are, indeed, often obliged to do this to keep up the remittances, and preſerve their places. The above-mentioned circumſtances in the French iſlands conceal the diſtance between maſter and ſlave, make the diſtinction eaſier to the latter, and, by exciting equally their affection and ambition, pave the way for introducing among them the cuſtoms and religion of their maſters.

The difficulties which the French had to conquer in their firſt attempts to convert ſlaves cannot now be aſcertained. But, long ſince, cuſtom and time have made the work eaſy to them. Religion, as they teach it, places particular merit in the work of converſion, which

is

is a ſpur to their piety. The Creole ſlaves know no other religion than Chriſtianity. The new African ſlaves are gradually abſorbed into the maſs. With the firſt rudiments of a new language, they draw in the precepts of a religion that mixes itſelf with every mode of common life; as foreigners are ſaid to learn Engliſh, by the oaths and imprecations with which our tongue abounds. Thus they acquire the religion gradually, with the cuſtoms of their new country, while attention and curioſity are ſtrong on them, before they have been put to hard or diſagreeable labour, to diſguſt them with the manners and worſhip of their maſters. It muſt be owned, indeed, that the Romiſh mode of worſhip, conſiſting of pomp and ceremony, is better calculated to ſtrike, *at firſt ſight*, the imagination of ignorant people, than our ſimple ritual. A remark, that may explain the attention which a very oppoſite ſect, the Moravians, pay to forms in managing ſavages, and the ſtreſs that they lay on the deſcription of our Saviour's ſufferings and crucifixion; as if it was neceſſary for improving the mind, to make religion a mechanic exerciſe, and draw piety as an object of ſenſe.

On the other hand, till the minds of our ſlaves be more enlightened, till their ſituation be made more eaſy, till they have a refuge againſt the effects of the caprice, ignorance, cruelty, poverty

poverty of their maſters, till they think themſelves intitled to the protection of ſociety, we cannot expect them to take their proper rank in the ſtate, nor to make any conſiderable progreſs in religious knowledge. At preſent they know and feel nothing of ſociety, but the hardſhips and puniſhments that it cruelly and capriciouſly inflicts; they lie far beyond its care, and out of the circle of its comforts. And I believe it will be found that Chriſtianity has ſeldom made any great progreſs, except where ſociety was in an advanced ſtate. Nor has it ſupported itſelf, but in the poliſhed parts of Europe and America. And how, rationally ſpeaking, can it happen otherwiſe? A conformity with revealed religion ſuppoſeth a conqueſt over the ſelfiſh paſſions; and unleſs we be firſt accuſtomed to ſacrifice, in a certain degree, theſe paſſions, for the advantages of ſociety, which come home to our immediate feelings, we ſhall hardly be willing to ſacrifice them for the hopes of religion. Indeed the benevolence or charity, which is the corner-ſtone of Chriſtianity, is evidently a refinement on juſtice, which is the bond of ſociety. But, can we refine on a law that doth not exiſt? As religion muſt be built on a foundation of law; ſo, in reſpect of practice, it may be called the perfection of ſociety: it brings futurity into the aid of law, and gives a moral ſanction to the edicts of authority. Could it find admittance among ſavages, it would

would of neceſſity poliſh them, and introduce ſociety among them. Modern philoſophers and politicians, even while exerting their influence to undermine its foundations, give religion this teſtimony: "Though too vulgar a "ſtudy for a fine ſpirit, and its precepts too "mean for his free ſentiments, yet religion is "an excellent inſtrument in the magiſtrates "hands to make the mob harmleſs, ſober, in-"duſtrious, honeſt, and obedient†."

And conformably to this reaſoning we find, it was in the cities, where ſociety had improved the underſtanding, that the apoſtles and their fellow-labourers chiefly made converts to Chriſtianity. A Pagan or country clown, and an heathen or infidel, ſoon became equivalent terms. Different, indeed, is the caſe now, when our fine wits, (who, had they lived in the early

† There is at laſt, indeed, one exception in the newly erected ſtates of America: they have almoſt generally declared againſt an eſtabliſhed religion as a neceſſary part of their conſtitutions; the ſucceſs cannot for ſome time be known.

The good effects of religion, in improving ſociety, is nobly teſtified in the ſucceſs of the Moravians among the ſavages of Greenland: by gradually introducing Chriſtianity and induſtry together, of ſelfiſh precipitate ſavages, they have made a band of provident, ſober, uſeful, ſympathiſing brethren. Their progreſs there is the triumph of religion over ignorant unaſſiſted reaſon. Yet our ſlaves are much more civilized than theſe originally were; but liberty, nature's inheritance to man, more than compenſated to them the difference.

early ages of Chriſtianity, merely for the credit of their parts, would have been moſt orthodox) are aſhamed of the religion of their fathers; and, rather than profeſs any religion in common with mankind, will maintain the ſillieſt paradox, the moſt degrading dogma. I wiſh, indeed, we could ſay, that good manners, and obedience to the laws, were not generally ſent away with what they affect to call bigotry: ſo indiſſolubly bound together are the characters of a good citizen and pious man.

In general the faculties of the mind muſt be expanded to a certain degree, before religion will take root, or flouriſh among a people; and a certain proportion of civil liberty is neceſſary, on which to found that expanſion of the mind, which moral or religious liberty requires.* By this aſſertion I exclude not particular inſtances; but ſuch neither form nor confute general rules. To bring this home to the caſe of our ſlaves: the great obſtacle to government

* When Moſes led the children of Iſrael out of Egypt, he was under the neceſſity of training them up to be an independent people, by multiplied forms and ſtrict diſcipline, for the ſpace of forty years. And it is apparent, from their behaviour during this long period, that ſlavery had ſo thoroughly debaſed their minds, as to have rendered them incapable of the exertions neceſſary for their ſettlement in the promiſed land, till all thoſe who had grown up as ſlaves in Egypt, had fallen in the wilderneſs, and laws and regulations worthy of a free people had taken place among them. This is a caſe full in point, and may ſuggeſt hints worthy of the legiſlature.

ment in bringing about this point, ſetting aſide its own careleſſneſs in ſuch things, is the alteration that it would at firſt make in private property. This it is true we have in chap. 2, ſect. 3. ſhewn to be more in appearance than in fact. But ſuch are our prejudices, that any law to improve the condition of our ſlaves, or to inſtruct them in the principles of religion, would be too apt to be conſidered as an encroachment on their maſters property, and an hinderance of their profit.

Still allowing this prejudice its full operation, ſomething conſiderable might be done by parliament, by colony legiſlatures, by willing conſcientious maſters. Expedients would offer themſelves, methods might be diſcovered, to advance the condition, and promote the religious intereſts of ſlaves, and ſave alſo, or even improve, their labour to their maſters, and the ſtate. Nay, the intereſt of the ſtate would ultimately be advanced by every indulgence extended to them. On the other hand, little can any other individuals attempt, and leſs can they effect, except to pray that the minds of our governors may be enlightened to ſee the honour and advantage of this undertaking. We come now to ſuggeſt ſuch an advancement of their condition, as may lay the foundation of that improvement, in morality and religion, which is the object of this work.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Privileges granted, and Police extended to Slaves.

WE have obſerved, that ſlaves are hardly in any inſtance conſidered as objects of police, being abandoned to the management, or rather caprice, of their ſeveral maſters. Nor doth law take notice of them, but to enforce power, which, without ſuch aſſiſtance, too frequently lays reaſon and humanity bleeding at its feet. Our laws, indeed, as far as they reſpect ſlaves, are only licenced modes of exerciſing tyranny on them; for they are not made parties to them, though their lives and feelings be concluded by them. As well may directions for angling be ſaid to be laws made for dumb fiſh, as our colony regulations for whipping, hanging, crucifying, burning negroes, be called laws made for ſlaves. To make them objects of civil government muſt therefore be an eſſential part of every plan of improvement that reſpects ſlaves; ſo that while obnoxious to the *penalties* of the law, they may be intitled to its *ſecurity*; and while law leaves them under the *management* of a maſter, it may protect them from his *barbarity*.

A judge ſhould therefore be appointed to determine diſputes of conſequence between maſter

and ſlave, as in the French colonies.* The power of the maſter ſhould be reſtrained within certain limits. He ſhould not be ſuffered to maim, beat, or bruiſe wretches with a ſtick. To ſlit ears and noſes, to break legs, or caſtrate, † ſhould make a man infamous for ever, and, equally with the greater excommunication, incapacitate him from being evidence, or taking inheritances; and much more ſhould ſuch cruelties ſhut the door againſt him from ſitting in an aſſembly, or council, as a legiſlator. The ſentiment of a gentleman, a native of St. Chriſtopher's, pleaſed me on this ſubject. "Were a white ſervant to behave to me as my "ſlaves often do, I ſhould be provoked to beat "him moſt unmercifully. But how can I ſtrike "a wretch, who dare not ſtrike again, who has "no law to which he may apply for ſatisfaction "for my exceſs, who has none but myſelf to "look up to for protection againſt my vio-"lence?" What pity is it, ſince ſociety interpoſes not, that ſuch ſentiments ſhould be uncommon?

* If it be objected that the appointment of a judge would encourage ſlaves to be running conſtantly to him with complaints, and annihilate the maſter's juſt authority; the example of Athens formerly, and France now, may be adduced in proof, that no ſuch effects neceſſarily follow.

† The laſt inſtance of this enormity was, I believe, perpetrated by an Engliſh ſurgeon in Granada.

If

If any ſlave has been flagrantly ill treated by a maſter, the maſter ſhould have a mark of infamy, as above, fixed on him, and the ſlave ſhould be made free without price: or, if he be unacquainted with any trade by which he can earn his bread, he ſhould be ſold for the benefit of the public, at an eaſy rate, to ſome conſiderate man. To make a ſlave free, who cannot earn an honeſt living, would be inhuman and impolitic. It is letting looſe on ſociety a thief in deſpair.

The marriages of ſlaves ſhould be put under ſome better regulation than at preſent; when a man may have what wives he pleaſeth, and either of them may break the yoke at their caprice. Nothing would more humanize ſlaves, and improve their condition, than their acquiring a property in their wives and families, and having a reſtraint laid on the promiſcuous intercourſe of the ſexes. Marriage, or a family, is the embryo of ſociety; it contains the principles, and ſeeds of every ſocial virtue. The care of a family would make them conſiderate, ſober, frugal, induſtrious. An ambition to promote the condition of their children, would ſharpen and improve their talents. They would avoid every fault, or meanneſs, that might hurt the intereſt or credit of ſuch dear relatives; even as in poliſhed ſociety, a man who is married,

ried, is generrally found a more uſeful and truſt-worthy citizen, than he who continues ſingle. *

The minimum of a negroe's allowance for clothes and proviſions ſhould be ſettled by law. Slaves ſhould be allowed at leaſt Saturday afternoon, as in Jamaica, for their own work, and to waſh their clothes. Sunday ſhould be wholly their own, for the purpoſes of inſtruction,

* I admire that policy of the Athenians, which allowed no unmarried man to hold any place in the magiſtracy, army, or navy. They did not depend on *his* fidelity to diſtribute juſtice, or defend the ſtate, who had not given to the public a wife and children, as ſureties of his good behaviour.

I mean not here to cenſure men, who, like Newton, preſerve themſelves chaſte and ſingle, the more cloſely to apply to the ſtudy of nature, or the intricacies of ſcience. Neither the common good, nor moral rectitude, require the matter to be ſo ſtrictly urged. Let the poet court his muſe, or the philoſopher hold dalliance with nature, or ſport in the fields of literature; we will not permit the cares of a family to interrupt his reſearches, or diſturb his amuſement. Matrimony claims only thoſe in each ſex, who find themſelves drawn irreſiſtibly to the other, and wiſhes only to ſanctify their commerce. No plea can be uſed for the celibacy of thoſe who keep not themſelves chaſte. There is a ſorry ſelfiſhneſs in their ſtealing all that they value in the ſtate, and leaving the cares to others. For they muſt acknowledge, that in every community a certain proportion muſt marry; and if it be a burden, why are they exempt? Not but if this were the place to prove it, marriage might be ſhewn to be, generally ſpeaking, the only rational foundation for ſocial happineſs, and the ſtate the God of nature appointed for man.

tion, and reſt from labour. Their little properties ſhould be ſecured to them; their families ſhould not be torn from them. All plantation ſlaves, as at preſent is the cuſtom in Antigua, ſhould be conſidered as fixed to the freehold, that they may not be ſold, or carried away wantonly at pleaſure. It would then be the next natural ſtep, to taſk them as propoſed in note, page 110, and ſuffer them, by their extra labour, to work out their freedom; ſtill taking care to keep as many of them attached to the ſoil, as might be wanted to carry on the ſtaple manufactures of the colonies as day labourers.

Theſe regulations would lay a foundation for that far diſtant view which we take of this ſubject; the time when liberty ſhall claim every exiled African for her own child. Their being connected with the ſoil, will draw after it certain perſonal rights, and all the claims of a family. Having once taſks aſſigned them, wages will follow, and the bargain become mutual and equal between the employer and employed *. If, on account of ill behaviour, or any particular cauſe, a maſter be under the neceſſity of

* One inſeparable conſequence of the communication of the *leaſt* degree of liberty or privilege to ſlaves, would be a deſire to be baptized, and to be conſidered as Chriſtians; for this they think ſecures the poſſeſſion of it to them. And much good might be done towards their inſtruction, by making a proper advantage of this bias to the religion of their maſters.

parting with a plantation ſlave, or baniſhing him, let it be done with the approbation of the judge; and let the tranſaction, with the reaſon aſſigned, be regiſtered. In like manner ſhould every decree given by the judge be regiſtered.

To improve their minds, the ſlaves ſhould be accuſtomed to determine, as jurors, on the behaviour of each other. This would inſenſibly lead them to diſtinguiſh between vice and virtue. What rendered the Grecian and Roman mobs (for their aſſemblies were no better) ſo ſuperior to the nations around them, but the privilege of being conſtituted judges both of public meaſures and private cauſes, and, as ſuch, of being daily improved by the public orations of their lawyers and ſtateſmen? The frequent attendance on our courts of law, and as jurymen in the trial of cauſes, which moſt people in our little colonies are obliged to give, except they bribe off their appearance, imparts a preciſion and readineſs in thinking to the coloniſts, that one ſhall in vain look for in the mother country in the ſame rank, on the ſame ſubjects. Yet they are often very unpoliſhed beings, when Europe firſt ſends them out among us.

Maſters ſhould be encouraged to grant freedom to ſuch ſlaves as ſhewed merit, and promiſed to make good uſe of it; but they ſhould be

be reſtrained from turning off ſlaves when become incapable of labour, as is often done, under pretence of giving them freedom. All colony laws, enacted on the narrow principle of perſonal diſtinction, to prevent or fetter manumiſſion, ſhould be annulled; ſuch as thoſe of Barbadoes and Granada, that fix a heavy fine to the public on the maſter who frees a ſlave. All mulattoes ſhould be ſent out free, trained to ſome trade or buſineſs, at the age of thirty years. Children of mulattoe girls ſhould be free from their birth, or from the commencement of their mother's freedom. Intendants ſhould be appointed to ſee them put in time to ſuch trade or buſineſs, as may beſt agree with their inclination, and the demands of the colony. This ſhould be done at the expence of their fathers, and a ſufficient ſum might be depoſited in the hands of the church-wardens, ſoon after their birth, to anſwer the purpoſe; the intendant keeping the church-wardens to their duty. This caſe ſuppoſes the mother to be free. If a man has a mulattoe born to him by another man's negreſs, he ſhould pay to her owner eight pounds ſterling, as ſoon as the child is weaned. It ſhould then be conſidered as the maſter's child, to be ſent out free as above. If the parent or maſter has neglected to inſtruct them in ſome uſeful calling, he ſhould be fined in an annuity equal to their maintenance.

By

By theſe means, the number of free citizens would inſenſibly increaſe in the colonies, and add to their ſecurity and ſtrength. A new rank of citizens, placed between the black and white races, would be eſtabliſhed. They would naturally attach themſelves to the white race, as the more honourable relation, and ſo become a barrier againſt the deſigns of the black. Nay, were the law extended to free every ſenſible negreſs (and they are generally domeſtics, and ſempſtreſſes) who ſhould bring a mulattoe child by her maſter, or any man worth as much as would repay her value to her maſter, I ſee no ill conſequences that could follow from the regulation. At leaſt, if it checked this improper commerce between maſter and ſlave, it would promote legal, and more honourable connections with their own equals. Still thieves, and vagabond beggars, ſhould be excepted from every privilege, and be kept, or reduced to ſlavery, whenever diſcovered; and if this were the law, under certain reſtrictions, even in Britain, much wealth and happineſs would redound from it.

On theſe outlines of ſociety, viz. the indiſſoluble tie of marriage, the claims of a family, the allowance of property, the aſcertaining the hours and time of labour, or allotting it by taſk; the fixing the minimum of maintenance and

and clothing; the adjudging them to the ſoil; the making them arbiters of each other's conduct; the aſſigning them a protector or judge, to preſerve their little privileges, and ſecure them againſt cruelty; in ſhort, on the vindicating for them the common rights of humanity, would we erect a plan, that ſhould look forward to their gradual improvement, and extend, by ſlow but ſure ſteps, to the full participation of every ſocial privilege. Thus ſecured from injury, thus partaking in the fruits of their own labour, they might be reſigned to the care of the paſtors that we have propoſed for them, to be built up in holineſs, and the fear of God, and taught to look forward with reſignation and hope, to a ſtate where every hardſhip, every inequality, inſeparable from the lot of humanity, ſhall be intirely removed, and fully compenſated.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now laid before the public what I ſuppoſed might bear the light; not all I have thought, not all I have written on the ſubject. In many points ſentiment has ſtruggled with the ſelfiſhneſs of the age, and been obliged to ſuppreſs many a generous wiſh: the feelings of benevolence have been forced to give way to the ſuggeſtions of narrow policy; and even a ſenſe

of

of the public intereſt has been made to yield to private prejudice. Yet if our ſlaves were once accuſtomed to taſte only a *few* of the ſweets of ſociety, a *little* of the ſecurity of being judged by known laws, they would double their application to procure the comforts and conveniencies of life; and, with their additional property, would naturally riſe in their rank in ſociety. Many, eſpecially if our plan of working them by taſk were to take place, would, in time, be able to purchaſe their own freedom. Their demands for manufactures would increaſe, and extend our trade; they would acquire a love for the country and government that ſhewed this attention to them. The labour of ſuch as became free might, for ſome time, be regulated on the ſame plan as that of labourers in England. Under the awe of, or rather aſſiſted by, a few regular troops, they might ſafely be truſted with arms for the defence of themſelves, their families, their own, and patron's property. Then would the colonies enjoy a ſecurity from foreign attacks that no protection from Europe can afford them.

The minds of theſe, our fellow-creatures, that are now drowned in ignorance, being thus opened and improved, the pale of reaſon would be enlarged; Chriſtianity would receive new ſtrength; liberty new ſubjects. The ſlave trade,

trade, in its preſent form the reproach of Britain, and threatening to haſten its downfal, might be made to take a new ſhape, and become ultimately a bleſſing to thouſands of wretches, who, left in their native country, would have dragged out a life of miſerable ignorance; unknowing of the hand that framed them; unconſcious of the reaſon of which they were made capable; and heedleſs of the happineſs laid up in ſtore for them.*

Thus, by a timely interpoſition of the legiſgiſlature, and a judicious attention to circumſtances, might Britain acquire a conſiderable acceſſion of ſtrength, have its trade and taxes improved, and a large number of uſeful fellow-ſubjects, that are now ſunk in miſery and bondage, made happy here, and capable of happineſs hereafter. And theſe are conſiderations that, ſurely, are ſufficiently powerful to unite the worldling and politician, with the pious ſaint and ſincere Chriſtian, to carry on the ſcheme as one man, ſince each would find his ſeparate account in it. Honour, profit, piety, all

* This is on the ſuppoſition that the ſlave trade could be conducted without that violence and injuſtice to individuals, and enormous loſs of lives in the paſſage from Africa, and, during the ſeaſoning in the colonies, that now accompanies it. For the greateſt benefit that can poſſibly happen to a few cannot juſtify us for endeavouring it by murder, by violence, bad air, and famine, in making the experiment. They muſt offer themſelves willingly for the voyage, and be better accommodated and treated during the courſe of it.

all join in the important requeſt; all ſolicit to have their claims to this benefit conſidered.

And what glory would it be to Britain, what an object of emulation, to enlarge the benevolent plan of France and Spain, for improving the condition of their ſlaves; and to open a way for the admiſſion of reaſon, religion, liberty, and law among creatures of our kind, at preſent deprived of every advantage, of every privilege, which, as partakers of our common nature, they are capable of and entitled to!

We have notoriouſly and continually thruſt ourſelves into the quarrels of others, and been laviſh of our blood and treaſure for the protection of ſtrangers and the advancement of ungrateful rivals, whoſe good-will, even in appearance, we could retain no longer than while our aſſiſtance was uſeful to them. But theſe miſerable wretches live only, *can* live only, for our profit, for our luxury. They have no protector, no refuge to flee to; and every penny laid out for their advantage would return with tenfold uſury to us. And ſhall we, from year to year, continue to ſpend our riches and ſtrength, in raiſing up thankleſs rival ſtates, and deny theſe unhappy beings a poor pittance of their own labour to make them a farther advantage and glory to us? Forbid it, honour; forbid it, juſtice; forbid it, prudence; forbid

forbid it, humanity. What is here propoſed may, poſſibly, on trial, be found ineffectual, though I have good ground to think it would not. But, ſurely, were the feelings of humanity, the reſearches of knowledge, and the obſervations of experience, collected in the conſultation, they could not fail in producing ſome plan capable of anſwering the wiſh of reaſon, religion, liberty; capable of ſecuring theſe bleſſings to Britain and her children. Reaſon will not be backward in a work that is to produce her advancement; Liberty will think no conceſſion great that is to extend her empire; Piety will not reckon that expence exceſſive that has the purchaſe of ſouls in view. Even ſelfiſh Intereſt will open her ears to the ſuggeſtions of accumulation. Slow methodical diſcretion muſt preſide over, and guide the gradually opening ſcene. What unwearied application have the premiums offered for the diſcovery of the longitude given riſe to? And what object more worthy of public encouragement than this, which propoſes to recover to reaſon, to utility, and happineſs, a multitude of human creatures drowned in ignorance and wretchedneſs?

Though what is here written, if deemed worthy of notice, will certainly expoſe the author to much abuſe from men, whoſe wiſhes and intereſt, as they imagine them to tend, are

oppoſed to all reformation; yet, is he not ſenſible of having had any thing ſiniſter, ſelfiſh, or cenſorious in view; nor can he, in any reſpect, be particularly benefited if the improvement were to take effect? He has intended no ſlight or injury to individuals, or to any condition or community of men, ſeparated from their oppoſition to the unalienable rights of human nature and the dictates of benevolence and religion. His conſolation is, that a ſimple love of truth, and a ſincere deſire to do good, alone excited him to the attempt, and that many pious and learned perſons thought it worthy the attention of the public. And after ſeriouſly reviewing the whole, he ſees no objection to be offered beforehand, either againſt the practicability, or expence of the plan, except the manners and prejudices of the age. On the contrary, there are conſiderations to encourage both individuals and government to make the attempt; arguments of ſtrength, not only to be drawn from topics of humanity, liberty, religion, but alſo of ſafety, conveniency, poſitive intereſt, and profit, both public and private.

Doubtleſs, in a ſubject like this, where we muſt be ſatisfied with general accounts, probable conjectures, and analogical reaſoning, a perſon inclined to take the other ſide may ſelect many things to be objected to, many to be contradicted. But, till ſuch a man can, ſimply

ſimply and generally ſpeaking, vindicate on the ſcore of religion, morality, or even policy, the conduct, or rather negligence of government, with reſpect to the ſugar colonies; till he can prove, that the diet, the clothing, the labour, the puniſhments of 400,000 negroes, ought to be left entirely to the diſcretion of their maſters; till he can affirm, that ſlaves have an adequate remedy, either in law, opinion, or intereſt, as practiſed or underſtood among us, againſt the parſimony, inſenſibility, prejudices, meanneſs, ignorance, ſpite, and cruelty of their owners and overſeers; till he can ſhew, that the preſent ſtate of our ſlaves is the beſt poſſible ſtate, both for them and their maſters, into which they can be put; and that we had a right to raviſh them from their country, to tranſport, and place them in our own; till he can ſhew it to be *impoſſible* to make them real Chriſtians, or to render them more uſeful members of the ſtate than they are at preſent; till he can ſhew that reaſon is convinced, humanity pleaſed, that liberty has no claim, and religion no wiſh; the juſtice of our remarks muſt remain eſtabliſhed, and the neceſſity of that attention to the improvement of ſlaves, both as men and Chriſtians, which is here enforced, muſt remain unconfuted.

May God, in his providence, in his goodneſs, eſteem us a people worthy of a bleſſing, ſo valuable

valuable and extenſive as the ſocial improvement and converſion to Chriſtianity of our ſlaves would indiſputably be. In this prayer, every pious, humane, and conſiderate reader will join with

The AUTHOR.

FINIS.